

JOHN WALSH MIDLIFE CRISIS OF A PUNK ICON



HOLIDAY HEAVEN THE BEST PLACES TO CHILL OUT



GIRL TROUBLE GI JANE GETS HER MARCHING ORDERS

THE MAGAZINE

TIME OFF

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THE INDEPENDENT

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Newspaper of the Year for photography

Minister rocked by mercenaries' revelations

By Fran Abrams and
Andrew Buncombe

THE Foreign Office minister Tony Lloyd was under increasing pressure last night as new revelations pointed to an embarrassingly close relationship between officials and mercenaries who ousted the regime in the African state of Sierra Leone.

Mr Lloyd was forced to admit that there were "points to correct" in information he had given to a Commons select committee earlier this week, when he said he had only recently been told that an investigation into the matter had been launched. He admitted yesterday that the matter had been passed to him "for noting" but he failed to notice it.

Mr Lloyd's admission came as solicitors acting for Sandline International released a letter which claimed they had liaised very closely with senior British officials over their operation to help reinstate the ousted president of Sierra Leone, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

Sandline, which is headed by former army officer Lt-Col Tim Spicer, is under investigation by Customs and Excise for alleged breaches of a United Nations arms embargo, but has insisted it was acting with government approval.

The company released a "strictly private" letter, sent to Robin Cook on 24 April, claiming the Foreign Secretary had breached its confidential nature when he referred to it in the Commons on 6 May.

The Independent revealed earlier

this week that Sandline had a series of meetings with Foreign Office officials just weeks before it arranged a shipment of arms to Sierra Leone, to help President Kabbah, who was ousted last May in a coup led by Johnny Paul Koroma. It was also revealed last week that officers from HM Customs and Excise had launched an investigation into whether the shipment had broken UN and EU embargoes, and the possible role of British officials.

Inside

How mercenaries met
Foreign Office
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The letter claims that Sandline met with up to four named officials from the Foreign Office. It also claims that it carried out similar briefings with US officials as well as senior military officers in west Africa. Sandline said it had been recommended to President Kabbah by his friend Peter Penfold, the High Commissioner to Sierra Leone. Mr Penfold is due to be questioned by Customs officers.

While there is no evidence that ministers knew about Sandline's operation or of their contact with officials, the affair is becoming increasingly embarrassing for the Government - suggesting as it does, a failure of communication within the Foreign Office. Mr Lloyd told a Commons select committee on Tuesday

that he did not know of a Customs investigation into the shipping of arms to Mr Kabbah's soldiers until last Friday. Mr Cook told the Commons the following day that Mr Lloyd had been given the information "for noting" two weeks earlier.

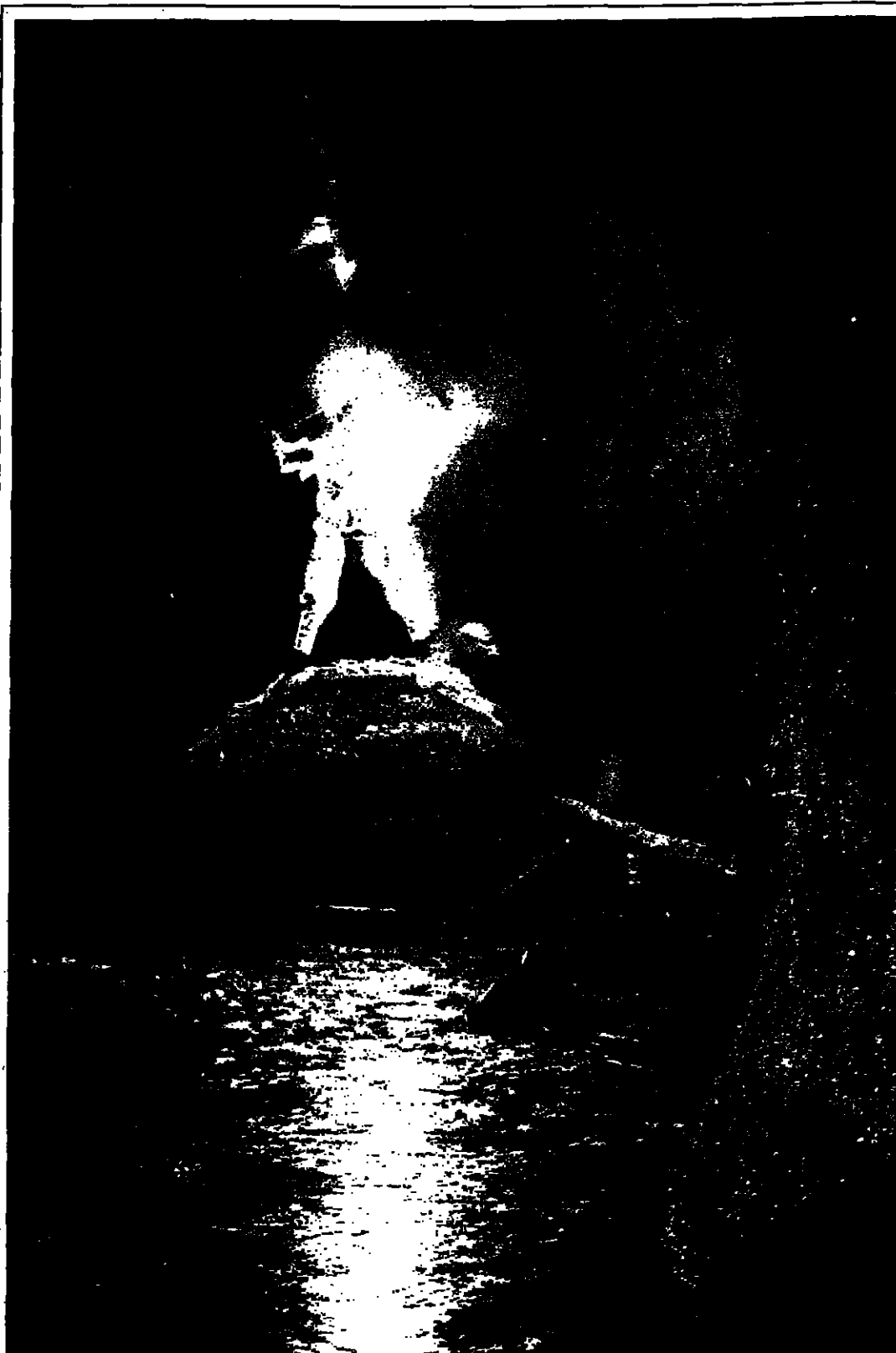
Although there is no suggestion that Mr Lloyd deliberately misled the committee, Tory MPs said last night that he had failed to apologise and would have to go. The most likely explanation was that his officials failed to draw the matter to his attention and he did not read his briefs properly.

David Wilshire, one of the MPs whose question about the Sandline affair floored Mr Lloyd when he appeared before the committee, has formally asked for him to be recalled. He said yesterday's statement was "a pathetic little apology" and was not good enough.

"Someone's going to have to be the fall guy and resign," he said.

In a letter to Donald Anderson, chairman of the committee, Mr Lloyd said he had nothing to add to what the Foreign Secretary had said. "When I returned to the office and checked all the papers I discovered that there were, indeed, points to correct. I discussed these with Robin Cook and particularly asked him to set the record straight," he said.

The Prime Minister's official spokesman said Mr Blair had every confidence in Mr Lloyd. Senior aides at the Foreign Office also maintained that he would not be forced to resign.



Hot water: 'The Burning Man' towers over 75 brave souls in the Devil's Pulpit who opted to wade the river gorge in a performance of 'The Secret Sign' by the Glasgow-based rna. Photograph: Peter Macdiarmid

Doctor on the run after nurse shot dead

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

A NATION-WIDE hunt was under way last night for a doctor, described as armed and dangerous, who went on the run after his girlfriend was shot in a pub car-park.

Thomas Shanks, 47, is wanted for questioning about the killing of Vicky Fletcher, a nurse, who was attacked in Castleford, West Yorkshire, on Thursday by a gunman. The anaesthetist - who was awarded a medal for an act of heroism while with the SAS during the 1970s guerrilla war in Yemen, according to a former member of the unit - worked at the same hospital as Ms Fletcher, who was 21, and with whom he was described as having a fiery relationship.

Police closed a school where Dr Shanks's ex-wife, Julie, works, and took her and her daughter into police protection. Dr Shanks phoned his former wife on Thursday. He and Ms Fletcher worked at Pontefract General Infirmary, where the nurse died of wounds to her back, arms and legs early yesterday.

She was with friends in Castlefields pub before the attack. Stephen Thackray, manager, said she saw the gunman's face at the window and went out to see him.

"Shots were firing everywhere ... the firing went on, then we saw the man casually walk back to his car, get into it and calmly drive away. We ... just tried to stop the bleeding; there was nothing else we could do but wait for the ambulance."

Ms Fletcher, trying to flee, scaled metal railings and was heading back to the pub entrance when the man fired a second burst, leaving her dying on the ground. There were reports of a row at a pub in which the doctor may have been involved the night before the shooting.

Quiet drink, page 5

Lawrence murder corruption claim

By Kathy Marks

THE investigation into the murder of black teenager Stephen Lawrence was obstructed by links between a Metropolitan Police officer and a notorious south London criminal whose son was a suspect, it was alleged yesterday.

Michael Mansfield QC, counsel for the Lawrence family, told the public inquiry into Stephen's death that this was the inference to be drawn from the failure by detectives to act on early tip-offs about the identity of the killers.

The inquiry was abruptly adjourned yesterday to permit the highest-ranking officers in the case to consult their

lawyers, after Mr Mansfield indicated that he planned to raise the possibility of a conspiracy among them to subvert the murder investigation. It will not now sit again until Wednesday.

The allegations of corruption came during questioning of Detective Sergeant Christopher Crowley, who discredited vital identification evidence, leading to the collapse of a private prosecution brought by Stephen's parents, Neville and Doreen.

They revolve around Clifford Norris, father of David Norris, one of five youths charged with killing Stephen. The inquiry has heard that Norris was a dangerous criminal who was known to buy off witnesses and jurors

and, according to rumour, police officers.

David Norris was one name repeatedly mentioned by police informants soon after Stephen was stabbed to death in Eltham, south London, by a white gang in 1993. Others included Neil and Jamie Accourt, whose three uncles, from a family called Stewart, were criminal associates of Clifford Norris. Despite the deluge of tips received by detectives, no arrests were made for two weeks.

Mr Mansfield said he was not suggesting that DS Crowley himself had connections to the Norris family. "What we do infer from the circumstances of this case, given the way in which the intelligence was not

used in the early days, is that an officer, somewhere, must have known the Norrises," he said.

"The Norris family is capable of corruption, and that is beyond dispute. There must have been a connection with a police officer. It is not known which, since very few files, including this officer's, have been made available."

"The fact is that this was one of the best-known names, and it was not researched in the early days. And from the Norris family to the Stewarts to the Accourts, there would have been a very strong inclination to protect the Accourts."

DS Crowley, who escorted the main prosecution witness to an identification parade but was

not on the murder inquiry team, said that he had "no knowledge" of corrupt links. "Do you know a DS Coles on the Flying Squad?" asked Mr Mansfield. "I've never heard of him," he replied.

He said he knew very few of the detectives who investigated the murder - in contrast, Mr Mansfield pointed out, to his assertion at the committal proceedings that "I know most of the officers, possibly, in the whole inquiry team."

Mr Mansfield said that Clifford Norris, who is now serving eight years for drugs and firearms offences, was at one time "wanted for a murder, but the murder was dropped because witnesses had been intimidated".

Beatles win historic ban on bootleg CD

By David Lister
Arts News Editor

IT WAS the "crummiest" recording ever to be associated with The Beatles. It brought the redneck George Harrison into a courtroom in high dudgeon. And it resulted yesterday in a landmark victory for musicians.

The former Beatles have won their High Court case to stop a CD produced from a 36-year-old tape of the band being released.

The judge paid particular

reference to George Harrison, who had told the court that the recording was the "crummiest" ever made in the group's name and then went on to reminisce about the earliest days of the world's most famous group.

Harrison's evidence in the case transcended the legal battle and will be a delight for Beatles historians. The 54-year-old, making a rare appearance and donning reading spectacles to pore over documents, was also unusually forthcoming about the group's early days, describing the seedy, drunken scenes in the Hamburg club where they were then performing, and even digressing to talk about his teenage days with John Lennon.

Yesterday, Mr Justice Neu-



Harrison: Tape was the 'crummiest' recording ever

berger gave a short ruling after a settlement of the four-day hearing. Lingasong Music Ltd, which had claimed it had the rights to exploit the tape because

John Lennon gave his permission in 1962 at the Star Club in Hamburg, agreed to abide by an injunction stopping the sales and to hand over the original tape.

The judge said he accepted all the arguments put forward for the members of the Beatles "with particular reference to the evidence of George Harrison".

The group, then at the beginning of their fame, having signed with EMI Records, and enjoying their first hit, "Love Me Do", were fulfilling an old contract to perform at the notorious club. They shared the bill that night in December with King Size Taylor and the Dominoes,

whose leader, Edward Taylor, used his own reel-to-reel machine to record the bands on stage.

"One drunken person recording another bunch of drunks does not constitute business deals," Harrison told the judge. He added: "The only person who allegedly heard anything about it is the one person who is dead, who can't ... say it's a load of rubbish."

The judge ordered that all copies of the recording be delivered up to the Beatles' solicitors and that the group should be paid their legal costs and damages to be assessed at an inquiry. Musical discord, page 3

Today's news

Jail drugs shift

PRISON governors are to be urged to take a softer line against prisoners using cannabis. Page 4

Dounreay alert

THE nuclear plant at Dounreay was closed down after a power failure which environmentalists claimed highlighted a potentially lethal design fault. Page 7



CHILDREN IN SUDAN ARE DYING

She's exhausted and starving, but she's walked all day to bring her grandchild to a relief centre. She may be too late.

Civil war and drought have brought thousands of children to the brink of death in Sudan. Malnourished, exhausted and sick, they are in desperate need of help. As the lead agency coordinating relief efforts in southern Sudan, UNICEF is providing high-energy foods, medical supplies and shelter to as many as possible. But every day more children move closer to starvation.

We rely totally on voluntary contributions. If you have a cheque book or a credit card, please use it now and help us save these children while there's still time.

unicef

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The bootleggers who strike discord

Some bands give away their unofficial recordings, but is this just a smart move against piracy? Fiona Sturges reports



Witness: Former Beatle George Harrison this week, as the 'dead boring' copyright case continued Photograph: PA

SO that's that. At the end of a long and winding saga, the former members of the Beatles yesterday won their court case, and Lingasong Music of Waltham Abbey, Essex, will not be able to release CDs of the group's 1962 performance in the Star Club in Hamburg.

But other musicians are often perfectly happy to hand out unofficial recordings. Some even make a point of it. At a concert just last week at the Hanover Grand, in London, Money Mark (better known as the Beastie Boys' keyboard player) sat a tape recorder on his keyboard and taped himself performing his most popular track, "Cry". At the end of the song he threw the tape into the audience, saying, "I've made a bootleg copy of this song in every city that I've played."

Money Mark is by no means the first musician openly to endorse bootlegging. The cult Sixties psychedelic band, the Grateful Dead, were outspoken in their approval of music piracy, viewing it as part of the creative process, while Eighties rock outfit Dire Straits distribute bootlegs via their fan club. But what is ostensibly an acceptance of this illegal practice

may be a smart ploy to put pirates out of business. Artists who bring out their own free unofficial recordings leave little room for bootlegged editions. Before a concert on Radio One in 1991, U2 distributed blank tapes complete with track listings and covers so that fans could make their own recordings.

Illegal tapes can, on the other hand, create a market for concert recordings or unreleased tracks from which record companies and artists can benefit. Illegal recordings of Bob Dylan concerts had long been distributed until Columbia released two box-sets - *Biograph* and *The Bootleg Series 1-3* - in 1991. These contained the same bootlegs that were being sold illegally, but of a superior quality.

Since the updating of copyright laws in 1988 record companies have come down hard on perpetrators. Last year Oasis battled with illegal versions of their album *Be Here Now*, offered on the Internet before its release. A fan, Steve Pockert, had pirated songs from a preview tape and left a message on an Oasis website offering copies. Creation

THE ROGUE TAPES



THE GOLDEN OUT-TAKES

THE BEATLES: Ironically enough the album the court case was about is available on bootleg - a 1962 recording of the band in Hamburg. But the most sought after Beatles bootleg is *Anthology Plus*. Available for £25 at record fairs, this contains material not included on the group's recent three set *Anthology* collection - albums of studio sessions the band released because they were fed up with being bootlegged.

LED ZEPPELIN: One can pay three figures for a rare Led Zep concert. As with a lot of bands, notably The Beatles, some of the most sought after recordings were the sessions done at the BBC. These have now been officially released on both sides of the Atlantic.

BOB DYLAN: Still the most collectible, the most prized remains *Live At The Royal Albert Hall*. It can fetch £200 plus. It is Dylan's 1966 concert with The Band shortly after going electric and is a pulsating performance. It even has an audience member shouting 'Jesus' at Dylan for betraying his folk roots. The concert actually took place in Manchester - but that's bootlegs for you.

THE ROLLING STONES: The key period is 1969-73, the Mick Taylor years when many thought them at the height of their powers. But the biggest prices can still be fetched for a recording of the July 5 1969 free concert in Hyde Park where Jagger paid tribute to the recently drowned Brian Jones. This album is generally known as *Stoned In The Park*.

PRINCE: Live concerts have proved fruitful for bootleggers. But the most precious for fans is a studio recording *The Love Symbol Album* which was planned to be a follow up to *Sign O' The Times* before the artist scrapped the release. The funky fusion of black rock and psychedelic can fetch up to £300.

And Sony issued a writ claiming colossal damages. The law now says that copyright generally lasts for the life of the author, plus 70 years after his or her death. The Act also outlaws the selling and distributing of any sound recordings without the consent of the artist and/or record company.

And it's not just the fans who get caught out. The Verve were forced to hand over all their royalties for "Bitter Sweet Symphony" to Mick Jagger, Keith Richards and former manager Allen Klein after using an orchestral version of the Stones' "The Last Time" even though the reference was felt to be "subliminal" by lead singer Richard Ashcroft.

As George Harrison said in court, the 1962 recording was the "crummiest" ever associated with the group. And aside from John Lennon's haunting early versions of Strawberry Fields, few of the *Anthology* 'rehearsals' matched up to the released songs. As for live recordings - three concerts were incredibly short and the sound appalling.

Bootlegging Led Zep was a notoriously risky business. Their late manager Peter Grant despised bootleggers and had staff eject them violently. He once got staff to frighten a man with a tape recorder and smash his gear. He turned out to be a city official measuring noise levels.

You might pay your £200 only to find it released officially by the end of the year. Dylan has already released the much bootlegged *Basement Tapes* and a triple CD of material on other bootlegs. His record company say there are also plans to release the Royal Albert Hall album.

Bootlegs of the Stones' excellent A and B sessions at the BBC from 1964 onwards have been popular, but will soon have little value as the BBC has collected them and will release them on CD before the end of the year.

The artist himself has now taken some of the best bootlegs, remixed them and put them out on the Internet. The resulting album, *Crystal Ball*, is available in record shops as an import at a price bootleggers would be proud of - around £50.

to rebuild the original album with your own samples. But where established acts can afford the cost of sampling, others find it financially crippling. Blueboy's first chart-topping track "Remember Me" samples US jazz musician Marlena Shaw's "Woman In The Ghetto". In handing over 25 per cent of royalties, Blueboy believe the sample to have cost them £250,000. Antony Johnson, managing director of their label, Pharm Records, said: "Blueboy have made a classic out of a record nobody knew."

Cheap-calls pioneer set to ring up £100m from telecoms sale

By Peter Thal Larsen

A FORMER actor who brought cheap international calls to thousands of telephone users is set to pocket about £100m by selling his company to a Japanese telecoms giant. Tom McCabe, who played bit parts in *Minder* and ran a telephone dating agency before founding Swiftcall in 1993, is currently understood to be negotiating the sale to KDD, the Japanese telecoms operator. A deal could be announced as early as next week.

Swiftcall has grown rapidly by offering cheap international telephone calls, undercutting established operators such as British Telecom and Mercury.

It currently has 250,000 customers and last year sold 1.5m pre-paid telephone cards which offer users international calls at rates up to 50 per cent cheaper than BT. It has recently started offering similar services in the US and Ireland.

Swiftcall currently offers calls to the United States at just



Tom McCabe: Abandoned flotation for outright sale

12p a minute, while BT charges 24p. A call to France costs 14p a minute, compared to 28p with BT.

Mr McCabe's achievement is all the more impressive because Swiftcall does not own its own telephone lines.

It is what is known in the industry as a reseller, renting large chunks of capacity from existing operators, and then

selling it through aggressive marketing campaigns.

Swiftcall had been preparing a stock-market flotation in London or New York. However, Mr McCabe has now decided to sell the company outright.

Last year, Mr McCabe, who owns 100 per cent of Swiftcall, gave KDD an option to take a 20 per cent stake in the company.

Swiftcall was the first reseller to enter the market, effectively breaking the duopoly held by BT and Mercury and forcing them to cut international call charges.

It has since been followed by a slew of other operators such as First Telecom which have begun to offer similar call rates.

However, industry analysts are concerned that, as competition increases, the resellers will be squeezed.

Swiftcall's growth has slowed dramatically in recent years. In the 12 months to the end of May, the company is likely to have made revenues of £27m, compared to £24m last year.



The way forward: Railtrack reveals its latest device to tackle the autumn menace of recalcitrant leaves on the line Photograph: Tim Vickery/National Pictures

Unveiled: a weapon to clear the wrong sort of leaves off the line

RAIL chiefs yesterday rolled out the latest device to tackle that bane of passengers' lives - leaves on the line. Railtrack's new £1m multi-purpose track machine will deal not only with leaves but ice, weeds and fire.

The new machine, displayed at Waterloo Station in London and then demonstrated at nearby Clapham Junction, has high-

pressure water jets to clear lines. Once the jets have gone into action, it puts sandite - a sticky gel-like substance - on the line to stop wheels sliding. The first 25 models will come into service in August 1999, with others being gradually introduced until the end of 2000.

"Leaves will always fall on the line, but the new machines

will help us keep the tracks clear and make autumn train travel more punctual," said Brian Mellitt, Railtrack's engineering and production director.

The concept vehicle was developed by Amec Rail of Croydon, Surrey, which is part of the consortium building the new fleet. The production model will be built by Windhoff of Germany.

Hit-man who took pity on female victim gets two years in prison

A HIT-MAN who spared his female victim after losing his nerve was jailed for two and a half years yesterday.

Orville Wright, 26, had agreed a £4,000 fee from his intended victim's former lover for carrying out the murder - with the promise of an extra £1,000 if he did it right, an Old Bailey court was told.

Former legal clerk Wright, his face masked by a balaclava helmet, and brandishing a knife, broke into the woman's flat in Tottenham, north London.

But after talking to the intended victim, Theresa Pitkin, 30, a mother of three, he told her he could not go through with it. Ms Pitkin had told the court: "I thought he was going

to rape me but then he told me he had been contracted to kill me."

At first Wright said he had been hired by a friend of her ex-lover's to cripple her. But then he said the ex-lover, 30-year-old David Martin, had contacted him and ordered her murder.

Mr Martin has not been charged and denies any involvement. Ms Pitkin kept Wright talking and eventually he lost his nerve and decided not to go through with the killing.

Mark Hill, prosecuting, said: "He was a hit-man about to carry out the killing and that he did not do it is a great relief to Miss Pitkin and others. He is a hit-man who lost his nerve."

Wright, of Bruce Grove, north London, was found guilty last month of aggravated burglary with intent to cause grievous bodily harm.

He said he went into the flat to warn Ms Pitkin about the contract killing but never intended to carry it out.

Mark Pallenghi, defending, said Ms Pitkin and her mother had forgiven Wright - and even offered to buy a ticket so he could return to Jamaica.

Judge David Murchie said he had reduced Wright's sentence because of the unusual circumstances of the case.

The judge told Wright, who worked in Jamaica for seven years as a legal clerk: "I can't forget her words that you were a hit-man who lost his nerve."

This week

"There are more interesting things than sport on a Saturday afternoon. Murder, for instance."

THE SATURDAY PLAY continues with "The Black Spectacles". Sir Donald Sinden plays John Dickson Carr's sleuth, Dr Gideon Fell, in a thoroughly engrossing whodunit. This afternoon, 3.02 - 4.00.

"Sssshh! This is strictly off the record."

WESTMINSTER HOUR. At the end of the programme, Simon Hoggart shares the secrets of Westminster with the rest of Britain in "It's a Funny Old World". Sunday evenings from 10 May, 10.45 - 11.00.

"What kind of loving would you expect from Mr Bean?"

BOOK AT BEDTIME continues with Sean Bean reading "A Kind of Loving" - Sean Bean's tale of love in Yorkshire. Weekday evenings from Monday 11 May, 10.45 - 11.00.

"Ever heard of a talk show host with more problems than her audience?"

THE EMERALD GREEN SHOW. Alcoholism. Adoption. Analysts. And that's before Emerald even goes to work. New comedy on Tuesday mornings from 12 May, 11.30 - 12.00.

"It used to be penniless students."

Now it's skint parents."

THE LEARNING CURVE. Libby Purves describes the best university courses, campuses and value for money. Tuesday afternoon, 12 May, 4.02 - 4.30.

"The Moral Maze: Where there are at least three sides to every story."

THE MORAL MAZE. An ethical debate where nothing is black and white. Michael Buick tries not to provide any answers. Wednesday evenings from 13 May, 8.02 - 8.45. Repeated Saturday evenings, 10.15.

"How interesting. Radio 4 talks about the weather."

STRANGE WEATHER DAYS. From summer snow to walls of water to freak tornadoes. You'll never complain about the weather again. Thursday mornings from 14 May, 9.30 - 9.45.

BBC RADIO 4

92-95FM & 198LW

YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

Quiet drink that ended in murder

By Jason Bennetto
Crime Correspondent

WHAT started out as a quiet evening drink with friends at a West Yorkshire pub ended in a nationwide murder hunt for a doctor on the run.

The bloody chain of events began simply enough as Vicky Fletcher, 21, relaxed at the Castlefields public house in Castleford on Thursday night.

Stephen Thackray, the pub's manager, recalled Ms Fletcher seeing a man she knew standing outside in the car park, looking through the window.

"She went outside to meet him and then all hell broke loose. Shots were fired everywhere, and everyone dived for cover. Everyone was shouting 'get down, get down'."

"There were about 80 people inside the pub and bullets came straight through the inner doors and went into the bar. Glass and mirrors were shattered. It's miraculous no one else was hit."

Dawn Sanders, 33, took up the story: "I heard three shots and then



Wanted man: Police are seeking Dr Thomas Shanks

another three and went dashing out, and saw the girl lying on the ground.

"She had been hit in the stomach and leg. Somebody tried to find a pulse and it was very faint."

"People were holding her hand and stroking it, telling her to hold on, but she was unconscious."

"Somebody from the pub rushed out with a dressing which they put on her side. There was blood every-

where; she was lying in a pool of blood - it was horrific."

Mr Thackray said that following the shooting he saw the gunman "casually walk back to his car, get into it and calmly drive away".

Ms Fletcher had managed to climb over metal railings and was heading back to the pub's entrance when the gunman fired again, leaving her dying on the ground.

Spent cartridge cases from a large automatic weapon littered the ground at the scene of the shooting yesterday and bullet marks could be seen in the brick wall of the pub and in the wooden window frames, next to a shattered window.

Police released the name of an anaesthetist, Dr Thomas Shanks, 47, who worked with Ms Fletcher at Pontefract General Infirmary, where the nurse died early yesterday of wounds to her back, arms and legs.

The couple had been having a stormy though long-standing relationship and are believed to have been involved in a heated row at a pub the night before the shooting.

Police said that Dr Shanks, a former Army officer, was "armed and

dangerous", and warned the public not to approach him.

As a precaution, officers closed Kings Heath junior, infant and nursery schools, where the doctor's estranged wife works, and took Dr Shanks's nine-year-old daughter out of her school. Other relatives were also moved from their homes to other accommodation.

Armed police spent the afternoon watching the flat in the hospital grounds where Dr Shanks lived with Miss Fletcher, but the anaesthetist was not inside.

Miss Fletcher was described as an attractive, popular young woman who trained as a student nurse at Pontefract General Infirmary and had worked there as a state registered nurse since September 1997.

A medical colleague said the doctor was a lively, outgoing person who claimed to have been in the SAS before going to medical school, although the Ministry of Defence would only confirm that he had been a soldier in the Army. He joined in 1968 and left in 1978. He re-enlisted as a doctor in 1983 and was discharged in 1991.

New Cross Hospital in Wolverhampton, West Midlands, confirmed that Dr Shanks worked at the site from July 1993 until December 1994.

Dr Shanks left the hospital when his marriage hit the rocks, leaving his daughter in the Midlands with his wife.

The doctor, who has worked at Pontefract General Infirmary since January 1995, and lived in hospital accommodation there, was reported to have been seen in Pontefract at 8.55am yesterday.

Police said that they were still checking out reports of his sighting, and that searches for his car had so far proved fruitless.

The doctor was described yesterday as a "typical, tough Scot", who was "very fit", and did not "suffer fools gladly".

One neighbour said: "He lived with a pretty, blonde girl, but they were people I never saw close up. I thought he had a good position - he was fit, he had a good job and he seemed to be all right."

"On the face of it, he was a lucky fellow."



Victim: Vicky Fletcher, 21, a nurse, was shot dead outside a pub

Police hunt bomb suspect

By Steve Boggan

A WARRANT was issued for the arrest of an Iranian physicist yesterday after a parcel-bomb explosion in which a private detective and his wife were hurt.

Michael Coyne, a 63-year-old former policeman, and his wife, Margaret, were said to be stable in hospital last night as detectives began an international search for Cyrus Ghiaffy, 57, whose car was found at Heathrow Airport hours after the blast.

The device, which exploded at the Coyne's home in Dundee, was one of three handed in to a TNT parcel delivery office in Thetford, Norfolk, on Thursday. The two others, addressed to intended victims in Kent and Fife, were defused by bomb disposal experts. One was addressed to Derek Lawson, 49, a former solicitor in Dundee.

Dundee Sheriff Court issued the arrest warrant yesterday afternoon. It is understood that Mr Coyne had been involved in investigating a civil case in which Mr Ghiaffy was involved.

Detective Chief Superintendent Tom Ross said Mr Ghiaffy had a number of business

interests in the area, although he refused to say whether these might provide a possible motive for the parcel-bomb attacks.

"I would regard anyone who engages in activities like these as dangerous," he said.

"He should not be approached, but anyone with information to his whereabouts should contact the police immediately."

A spokeswoman for Thyside police said there was no terrorist motive in the attacks.

She said the discovery of Mr Ghiaffy's car at Heathrow Airport meant police were considering the strong possibility that he was no longer in the country.

He is described as 5ft 6ins tall, of a thin build and of Asian appearance with a pock-marked face.

He lived in the St Andrews area of Fife but police would not say whether he had worked as a physicist at the university.

"The fact that he is a physicist and the fact that he is Iranian should not be misconstrued as terrorism," the spokeswoman said. She said there appeared to be a link to a previous civil case.

Mr and Mrs Coyne were reported to be conscious and not seriously injured last night.

Unions make point over low turnout

By Barrie Clement
Labour Editor

A LOW election turnout has destroyed Tony Blair's argument about high participation before unions are granted recognition, senior union leaders declared yesterday.

Less than 25 per cent of Londoners voted for a mayor and a new council for London, but the Prime Minister is insisting on a 40 per cent "yes" vote at a workplace before collective bargaining is backed by law. John Monks, TUC leader, joined John Edmonds, general secretary of the GMB general union, yesterday in attempting to expose "double standards".

Some union sources believed that predictions of a low turnout had persuaded Downing Street to postpone discussion of the White Paper until next week.

John Monks said on Radio 4: "Less than a quarter of Londoners voted for the introduction of the mayor, but that's going to be enough for the Government. I'm hoping that it will take the same view as far as unions are concerned."

In private the unions have conceded the principle by suggesting a 30 per cent "yes" vote instead of 40 per cent. But union leaders refused to compromise on other issues in the "fairness at work" White Paper.

Yes Audrey, my sweet?



Cary, my darling?

Do you mind if we stop a moment?
The view looks so enchanting.

But of course my angel.



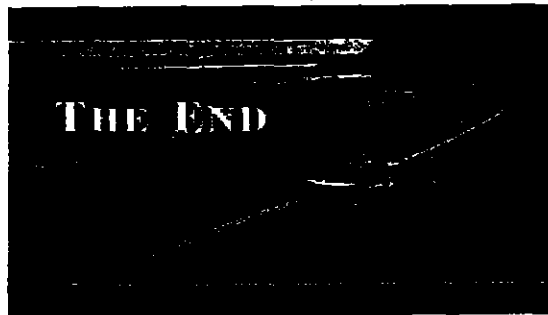
I do so love Monaco at this time of year.



Actually, my sweet,
that's Torquay.



Oh don't spoil it, just kiss me you fool!



THE END

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The final count in local elections and London's referendum

THE CAPITAL'S DECISION

BARKING & DAGENHAM: Yes 20,534 (73.49%) No 7,406 (26.51%) Electorate 112,759; Turnout 27,940 (24.78%)
BARNET: Yes 55,487 (69.62%) No 24,210 (30.38%) Electorate 225,608; Turnout 79,697 (35.33%)
BEXLEY: Yes 36,527 (63.28%) No 21,195 (36.72%) Electorate 166,246; Turnout 57,722 (34.72%)
BRENT: Yes 47,309 (78.38%) No 13,050 (21.62%) Electorate 168,817; Turnout 60,359 (35.75%)
BROMLEY: Yes 51,410 (57.08%) No 38,662 (42.92%) Electorate 224,309; Turnout 90,072 (40.16%)
CAMDEN: Yes 36,007 (81.18%) No 8,348 (18.82%) Electorate 135,073; Turnout 44,355 (32.84%)
CITY OF LONDON: Yes 977 (62.99%) No 574 (37.01%) Electorate 5,144; Turnout 1,551 (30.15%)
CROYDON: Yes 53,863 (64.72%) No 29,368 (35.28%) Electorate 223,816; Turnout 83,231 (37.19%)
EALING: Yes 52,348 (76.49%) No 16,092 (23.51%) Electorate 208,827; Turnout 68,440 (32.77%)
ENFIELD: Yes 44,297 (67.18%) No 21,639 (32.82%) Electorate 200,826; Turnout 65,936 (32.83%)
GREENWICH: Yes 36,756 (74.84%) No 12,356 (25.16%) Electorate 151,510; Turnout 49,112 (32.42%)

HACKNEY: Yes 31,956 (81.62%) No 7,195 (18.38%) Electorate 115,828; Turnout 39,151 (33.80%)
HAMMERSMITH & FULHAM: Yes 29,171 (77.94%) No 8,255 (22.06%) Electorate 111,520; Turnout 37,426 (33.56%)
HARINGEY: Yes 36,296 (83.76%) No 7,038 (16.24%) Electorate 145,003; Turnout 43,334 (29.88%)
HARROW: Yes 38,412 (68.82%) No 17,407 (31.18%) Electorate 154,973; Turnout 55,819 (36.02%)
HAVERING: Yes 36,390 (60.47%) No 23,788 (39.53%) Electorate 178,145; Turnout 60,178 (33.78%)
HILLINGDON: Yes 38,518 (63.10%) No 22,523 (36.90%) Electorate 177,214; Turnout 61,041 (34.44%)
HOUNSLOW: Yes 36,957 (74.64%) No 12,554 (25.36%) Electorate 154,996; Turnout 49,511 (31.94%)
ISLINGTON: Yes 32,826 (81.55%) No 7,428 (18.45%) Electorate 117,887; Turnout 40,254 (34.15%)
KENSINGTON & CHELSEA: Yes 20,064 (70.32%) No 8,469 (29.68%) Electorate 102,275; Turnout 28,533 (27.90%)
KINGSTON-UPON-THAMES: Yes 28,621 (68.69%) No 13,043 (31.31%) Electorate 101,313; Turnout 41,664 (41.12%)
LAMBETH: Yes 47,391 (81.80%) No 10,544 (18.20%) Electorate 182,842; Turnout 57,935 (31.69%)

LEWISHAM: Yes 40,188 (78.42%) No 11,060 (21.58%) Electorate 174,890; Turnout 51,248 (29.30%)
MERTON: Yes 35,418 (72.20%) No 13,635 (27.80%) Electorate 130,627; Turnout 49,053 (37.55%)
NEWEHAM: Yes 33,084 (81.37%) No 7,575 (18.63%) Electorate 145,750; Turnout 40,659 (27.90%)
REDBRIDGE: Yes 42,547 (70.16%) No 18,098 (29.84%) Electorate 173,754; Turnout 60,645 (34.90%)
RICHMOND-UPON-THAMES: Yes 39,115 (70.80%) No 16,135 (29.20%) Electorate 124,057; Turnout 55,250 (44.54%)
SOUTHWARK: Yes 42,196 (80.70%) No 10,089 (19.30%) Electorate 159,905; Turnout 52,283 (32.70%)
SUTTON: Yes 29,653 (64.82%) No 16,091 (35.18%) Electorate 130,938; Turnout 45,744 (34.94%)
TOWER HAMLETS: Yes 32,630 (77.51%) No 9,467 (22.49%) Electorate 123,060; Turnout 42,097 (34.21%)
WALTHAM FOREST: Yes 38,344 (73.13%) No 14,090 (26.87%) Electorate 156,172; Turnout 52,434 (33.57%)
WANDSWORTH: Yes 57,010 (74.32%) No 19,695 (25.68%) Electorate 198,361; Turnout 76,705 (38.67%)
WESTMINSTER: Yes 28,413 (71.48%) No 11,334 (28.52%) Electorate 125,054; Turnout 39,747 (31.78%)



Counting up: Tony Blair greeting reporters outside No 10 yesterday after the local election and London mayor referendum results. Photograph: PA

METROPOLITAN AUTHORITIES

BARNESLEY: Lab, 43; C, 7; Ind, 1; Others, 1. Lab, No change
BIRMINGHAM: Lab, 53; C, 17; LD, 16; Others, 1. Lab, No change
BOLTON: Lab, 47; C, 8; LD, 5. Lab, No change
BRADFORD: Lab, 65; C, 18; LD, 7. Lab, No change
BURY: Lab, 39; C, 6; LD, 3. Lab, No change
CALDERDALE: Lab, 28; C, 13; LD, 12; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
COVENTRY: Lab, 43; C, 7; Ind, 1; Others, 1. Lab, No change
DONCASTER: Lab, 47; Ind, 7; LD, 6; C, 3. Lab, No change
DUDLEY: Lab, 58; C, 7; LD, 7. Lab, No change
GATESHEAD: Lab, 51; LD, 15. Lab, No change
KIRKLEES: Lab, 43; LD, 20; C, 7; Green, 2. Lab, No change
KNOWSLEY: Lab, 65; LD, 1. Lab, No change
LEEDS: Lab, 50; LD, 9; C, 9; Green, 1. Lab, No change
LIVERPOOL: LD, 52; Lab, 39; LD, 4; Ind, 1; Others, 3. LD, gain from NOC
MANCHESTER: Lab, 54; LD, 15. Lab, No change
NEWCASTLE-UPON-TYNE: Lab, 65; LD, 13. Lab, No change

KEY TO THE POLLS

Thursday's local government elections covered 166 English councils: 36 metropolitan authorities; 10 unitary authorities; 88 shire district councils; and 32 London boroughs.

* NOC=No overall control

OLDHAM: Lab, 36; LD, 23; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
ROCHDALE: Lab, 36; LD, 18; C, 6. Lab, No change
ROTHESHAM: Lab, 65; C, 1. Lab, No change
SALFORD: Lab, 57; LD, 3. Lab, No change
SANDWELL: Lab, 60; LD, 9; C, 2; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
SEPTON: Lab, 31; LD, 23; C, 14; Ind, 1. NOC No change
SHEFFIELD: Lab, 50; LD, 36; C, 1. Lab, No change
SOLIHULL: C, 20; Lab, 17; LD, 11; R, 3. NOC No change
ST HELENS: Lab, 42; LD, 10; C, 2. Lab, No change
STOCKPORT: LD, 30; Lab, 27; R, 3; C, 3. NOC No change

SUNDERLAND: Lab, 58; C, 4; LD, 2; LD, 1. Lab, No change
TAMESIDE: Lab, 49; Ind, 4; LD, 2; C, 2. Lab, No change
TRAFFORD: Lab, 35; C, 23; LD, 4. Lab, No change
NORTH TYNSIDE: Lab, 43; C, 8; LD, 7; Ind, 2. Lab, No change
SOUTH TYNSIDE: Lab, 51; LD, 6; Others, 3. Lab, No change
WAKEFIELD: Lab, 31; LD, 23; Ind, 1; LD, 1. Lab, No change
WALSALL: Lab, 30; C, 16; LD, 6; Ind, 1; Others, 7. NOC No change
WIGAN: Lab, 30; LD, 1; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
WIRRAL: Lab, 41; C, 16; LD, 8; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
WOLVERHAMPTON: Lab, 46; C, 14; LD, 2. Lab, No change

NON-METROPOLITAN, OR SHIRE, AUTHORITIES

ADUR: LD, 22; Lab, 10; C, 5; Ind, 2. LD, No change
AMBER VALLEY: Lab, 37; C, 6. Lab, No change
BARNSTAPLE: Lab, 23; C, 11; Others, 4. Lab, No change
BASILDON: Lab, 23; LD, 13; C, 6. Lab, No change
BASINGSTOKE & DEANE: C, 25; Lab, 15; LD, 13; Ind, 4. NOC No change
BASSETLAW: Lab, 35; C, 8; Ind, 3; LD, 3; Others, 1. Lab, No change
BRADFORD: Lab, 22; LD, 15; C, 9; Ind, 7. NOC No change
SOUTH BEDFORDSHIRE: Lab, 21; LD, 16; C, 13; Ind, 3. NOC No change
BRENTWOOD: LD, 25; C, 11; Lab, 2; LD, 1. LD, No change
BROADLAND: C, 31; Lab, 16; LD, 8; Ind, 4. Lab, No change
BROOKBOURNE: C, 31; Lab, 11. C, No change
BURNLEY: Lab, 31; LD, 9; Ind, 6; C, 2. Lab, No change
CAMBRIDGE: Lab, 21; LD, 18; C, 3. Lab, No change
SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE: Lab, 21; LD, 16; C, 13; Ind, 9. NOC No change
CANNOCK CHASE: Lab, 39; LD, 3. Lab, No change
CARLISLE: Lab, 33; C, 14; LD, 3; Others, 1. Lab, No change
CHELTENHAM: LD, 27; C, 9; Vac, 1; Others, 4. LD, No change
CHEKSWELL: Lab, 24; C, 17; LD, 7; Ind, 4. LD, No change
CRESTER: Lab, 26; LD, 17; C, 15; Ind, 2. NOC No change
CHORLEY: Lab, 33; LD, 7; C, 6; Ind, 2. Lab, No change
COLCHESTER: LD, 27; Lab, 17; C, 15; R, 1. LD, No change
CONGLETON: LD, 26; Lab, 11; C, 7; Ind, 1. LD, No change
CRANWORTH: LD, 13; C, 13; Lab, 4; Ind, 4. LD, No change
CRAWLEY: Lab, 27; C, 3; LD, 2. Lab, No change
CREWE & NANTWICH: Lab, 37; C, 15; LD, 4; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
DAVENTRY: C, 17; Lab, 13; LD, 3; Ind, 2. NOC No change
EASTBOURNE: LD, 18; C, 12. LD, No change
EASTLEIGH: C, 23; R, 24; Lab, 8; C, 7. NOC No change
ELLESMERE PORT & NESTON: Lab, 30; C, 5. Lab, No change
ELMBRIDGE: C, 23; R, 24; Lab, 8; Ind, 1. NOC No change
EPFING FOREST: Lab, 17; LD, 15; C, 15; R, 9; Ind, 3. NOC No change
EXETER: Lab, 23; LD, 8; Lab, 3; C, 3. Lab, No change
FAREHAM: LD, 16; C, 14; Lab, 8; Others, 4. NOC No change
GLOUCESTER: Lab, 41; C, 8; C, 6. Lab, No change
GOSPORT: Lab, 10; C, 9; LD, 3; Others, 8. NOC No change
GREAT YARMOUTH: C, 14; LD, 13; LD, 12; Lab, 10. NOC No change
HARLOW: Lab, 38; LD, 3; C, 1. Lab, No change
HARRINGTON: LD, 40; C, 14; Lab, 4; Ind, 1. LD, No change
HART: LD, 15; C, 14; Ind, 6. NOC No change
HASTINGS: Lab, 18; LD, 13; C, 1. Lab, No change
HAVANT: LD, 14; C, 14; Lab, 8; Ind, 3; Others, 3. NOC No change
NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE: Lab, 26; C, 17; LD, 6; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
HERTS: Lab, 22; C, 11; LD, 6. LD, No change
HUNTINGDONSHIRE: C, 34; LD, 14; Lab, 3; Ind, 2. C, No change
HYNDURN: Lab, 35; C, 12. Lab, No change
IPSWICH: Lab, 40; C, 8. Lab, No change
SOUTH LAKELAND: LD, 20; C, 13; LD, 10; Ind, 9. NOC No change
WEST LANCASHIRE: Lab, 32; C, 20; Ind, 2; Others, 1. Lab, No change
LINCOLN: Lab, 28; Vac, 1; C, 1; Others, 3. Lab, No change
WEST LINDSEY: LD, 18; Ind, 9; Lab, 5; C, 4; Others, 1. LD, No change
MACCLESFIELD: C, 37; LD, 10; Lab, 10; R, 3. C, No change
MAIDSTONE: LD, 21; Lab, 16; C, 13; Ind, 5. NOC No change
MOLE VALLEY: LD, 16; C, 14; Ind, 9; Lab, 2. NOC No change
NEWCASTLE-UNDER-LYME: Lab, 42; LD, 9; C, 5. Lab, No change
NORWICH: Lab, 35; LD, 13. Lab, No change
NUNEATON & BEDWORTH: LD, 12; Ind, 7; C, 7; Lab, 6; Others, 2. NOC No change
PENWITH: LD, 29; Lab, 18; C, 3; Ind, 1. LD, No change
PRESTON: Lab, 30; C, 13; LD, 13; Ind, 1. NOC No change
FURBER: LD, 8; C, 6; Ind, 5; Lab, 3. NOC No change
REDDITCH: Lab, 23; C, 4; LD, 2. Lab, No change
REIGATE & BANSTEAD: C, 19; Lab, 13; LD, 11; R, 5; Ind, 1. NOC No change
ROCHFORD: LD, 18; Lab, 12; C, 6; R, 3; Ind, 1. LD, No change
ROSENDALE: Lab, 25; C, 11. Lab, No change
RUGBY: Lab, 22; C, 12; R, 5; LD, 5; Ind, 4. NOC No change
RUNNEMEDE: C, 23; Lab, 12; Ind, 5; LD, 1; R, 1. C, gain from NOC
RUSHMORE: C, 17; LD, 14; Lab, 14. NOC No change
SHERBURN & ATCHAM: Lab, 21; LD, 12; C, 11; Ind, 1. NOC No change
ST ALBANS: LD, 30; Lab, 16; C, 11. LD, No change
STEVENAGE: Lab, 37; C, 2. Lab, No change
STRAITFORD-ON-AVON: C, 37; LD, 18; Ind, 6; Lab, 5; Others, 2. NOC No change
STROUD: LD, 24; C, 18; Ind, 6; Lab, 5; Green, 4. NOC No change
SWALE: LD, 22; Lab, 19; C, 7; Ind, 1. LD, No change
TAMWORTH: Lab, 28; C, 1; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
TANDRIDGE: LD, 18; C, 17; Lab, 7. NOC No change
THREE RIVERS: LD, 21; LD, 12; C, 17; Lab, 8. NOC No change
TUNBRIDGE WELLS: C, 27; LD, 12; Lab, 7; Ind, 2. C, gain from NOC
WATFORD: Lab, 21; LD, 8; C, 7. NOC No change
WAVENEY: Lab, 41; C, 3; LD, 2; Ind, 2. LD, No change
WELWYN HATFIELD: Lab, 27; C, 20. Lab, No change
WYCOMBE & PORTLAND: Lab, 16; LD, 13; Ind, 4; R, 2. NOC No change
WINCHESTER: LD, 37; C, 10; Lab, 4; Ind, 4. LD, No change
WOKING: LD, 16; C, 11; Lab, 7; Ind, 1. LD, No change
WORCESTER: Lab, 22; C, 10; LD, 2; Ind, 2. Lab, No change
WORKINGTON: LD, 21; C, 15. LD, No change
WYRE FOREST: Lab, 28; LD, 6; C, 4; Lab, 3; Ind, 1. Lab, No change

UNITARY AUTHORITIES

BRISTOL: Lab, 43; LD, 17; C, 7; Vac, 1. Lab, No change
DERBY: Lab, 37; C, 4; LD, 3. Lab, No change
HARTLEPOOL: Lab, 33; LD, 8; C, 5; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
ISLE OF WIGHT: LD, 16; C, 15; Ind, 11; Lab, 4; Others, 2. LD, No change
KINGSTON-UPON-BULL: Lab, 53; LD, 4; Ind, 2; C, 1. Lab, No change
MILTON KEYNES: Lab, 27; LD, 19; C, 4; Ind, 1. Lab, No change
PORTSMOUTH: Lab, 21; LD, 10; C, 8. Lab, No change
SOUTHAMPTON: Lab, 28; LD, 14; C, 3. Lab, No change
STOKE-ON-TRENT: Lab, 55; LD, 3; C, 1; Others, 1. Lab, No change
SWINDON: Lab, 40; LD, 9; C, 5. Lab, No change

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Blair set to turn screw on old Labour

By David Walker

A SPECTACULAR Labour win yesterday in Harrow after a late count confirmed a marked suburban shift in its council strength paralleling its parliamentary gains at the last election.

Labour leaders are already using Thursday's election results to increase the pressure on "old" Labour councillors to shape up to the Blairite agenda or to face de-selection.

Tony Blair himself talked of receiving a "message from the electorate" that "good dynamic new Labour councils" were appreciated, leaving unspoken the thought that in Liverpool and Sheffield, where Labour lost heavily, old Labour deserved to lose.

Labour ministers will now review the "best value" programme for councils by which the Government hopes to con-

vince voters it is as serious as the Tories were about efficiency in the town halls while ending compulsory competitive tendering of local services.

However, the voters' willingness to punish sleaze and poor performance was shown to be limited. Labour lost only three seats in Doncaster, where a police investigation is still going on and only four seats in Hull, where allegations of corruption have been flying amid evidence of chronic under-performance in the city's schools.

Official Tory satisfaction at gaining some 250 seats over their 1994 score was dented when in another late result, the party lost control of previously rock-solid Bromley in south London. Though Tories remain the largest party, the Liberal Democrats are likely to take power with Labour support.

Bromley - which in the ear-



Ringing endorsement: John Prescott celebrating Labour's successes in the capital with the Town Crier of London, Peter Moore. Photograph: Rebecca Naden

The party did well in impregnable boroughs such as Greenwich and Hammersmith, and also in areas once considered prime Tory territory, including Ealing, Enfield and Croydon.

The Liberal Democrats, despite aggregate losses totalling just over 100 seats, remain the second strongest local government party - able to lose significant seats in places such as Cheltenham, Worthing and Eastbourne but still stay in charge. The party did, however, lose control in former strongholds, in Kingston upon Thames and the Isle of Wight - where the Tories picked up 9 seats - and saw several of its other authorities move to a position where no single party has a commanding majority.

The Tories gained seats in no set pattern, taking overall control in Runnymede and Tunbridge Wells, and picking up odd seats in Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Bristol, Portsmouth and Bradford.

The flagship London boroughs did the party proud, registering a number of extra seats. In Wandsworth, where council tax was cut last month, the voters gave the Conservative majority five extra seats.

Women's Coalition urge Irish 'yes' vote

By Kim Sengupta
in Belfast

THE Northern Ireland Women's Coalition yesterday made an impassioned plea for a "yes" vote in the coming referendum, and also announced its intention to field candidates in the subsequent elections for a new Assembly.

The non-Sectarian group, founded two years ago by two women - one Catholic, one Protestant - went on to achieve international acclaim for its role in the peace talks, with Senator George Mitchell saying the agreement would not have been possible without them.

The co-founders of the Coalition, Monica McWilliams, a social scientist, and Pearl Sagar, a social worker, are expected to be among the candidates who will stand at the election due to be held following the referendum on 22 May.

Many observers expected the group would be wound up after the Stormont accord was reached. Instead, it has doubled

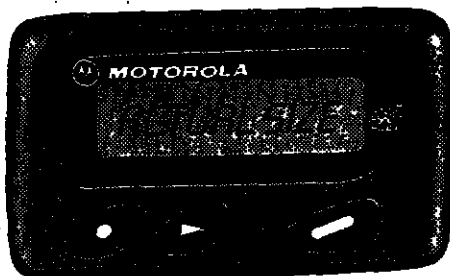
its membership to 500, with support increasing by the day.

However, entering the political arena has led to problems. Yesterday, the movement's headquarters received a stream of insulting and sexist telephone calls from detractors stating the women should know their place.

More importantly, it faces serious financial problems. The organisation had received a grant in the past from a trust for its work in the education and empowerment of women. But electoral laws prohibit receiving such aid for political work.

Two men were the victims of punishment shootings in Belfast. At around 10.30 on Thursday evening a 26-year-old man was abducted at a Loyalist area in the north of the City and shot in the right leg. An hour later a 38-year-old man was shot on both knees and both ankles in Republican West Belfast. Both the men were yesterday recovering in hospital, and police sources blamed paramilitaries for the shootings.

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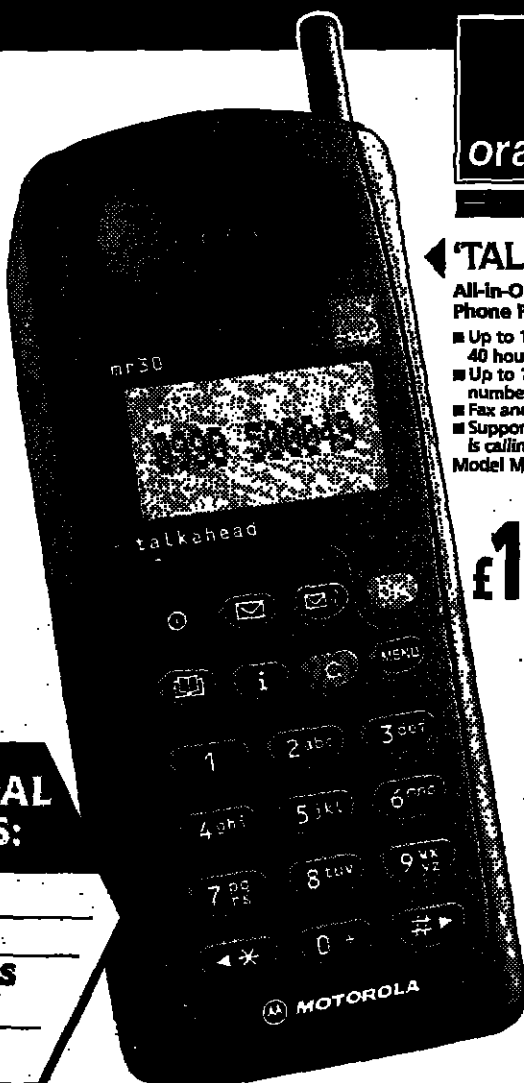
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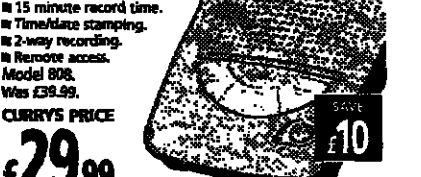
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Palace drops hint that chaplain should resign



James: Got frosty response

By Clare Garner
and Anthony Bevis

CANON Eric James, an Extra Chaplain to the Queen, yesterday stood by his controversial remarks about the merits of an elected head of state, despite a frosty response from Buckingham Palace.

The Palace - which had been attacked for "toadying

sycophancy" by the outspoken canon - delivered a most subtle hint that the Extra Chaplain's resignation might be in order. Certainly, it offered, it appeared that it would be accepted with grateful alacrity.

A Palace spokesman commented on Canon James's declaration that it was time "for a profound reflection upon, and reconsideration of, the

role of the monarch", with the statement: "How he reconciles these comments with his position as Extra Chaplain to the Queen is a matter for him."

But Canon James said yesterday that he had no intention of resigning from his post. "I want to agree that it's my own affair," he said. "I stand by all I've said. We shall wait and see for a little while."

Canon James was a fully-fledged chaplain to the Queen between 1984 and 1995, when he reached the age of 70 and moved on to being an Extra Chaplain. He now preaches once a year at one of the royal chapels, most often in St James's Palace.

Most years he is invited to go on a "jolly" at Holyrood or Sandringham.

Yesterday, republicans welcomed the canon's remarks, particularly given the fact that they come from a member of the royal establishment. They hailed him as the first insider to break ranks.

But the equally outspoken Ann Widdecombe, the former Tory Minister who left the Church of England for the Roman Catholic church, said

yesterday that the canon should mind his own business.

"It's a pity that Canon Eric James doesn't confine himself to spiritual matters," she told *The Independent*.

That he should waste such time on his theory of running the realm instead of getting on, spreading the gospel, which is what he's supposed to do, is a good example of how the

Church of England has lost its way."

Miss Widdecombe said that while women priests had been the final straw for her departure from the Church of England, "there had been a huge bundle of straw before that, some of which was this sort of thing - failure to concentrate on the spiritual, and an eternal desire to interfere in politics."

The 'heredity lottery' that produces our monarchs

ONE year into Cool Britannia, can it be that a revolution is beginning to happen after all? A speech this week about the Monarchy, amplified in an article in yesterday's *Independent*, certainly indicates a mood shift in unexpected circles.

Canon Eric James, who delivered a lecture in Westminster Abbey on Thursday obscurely entitled "Spirituality, Shakespeare and Royalty", is a member of the exclusive club of former royal chaplains, a breed not given to iconoclasm. The Canon gave no quarter. But does what he said stand up? Once, such a peroration would have been dismissed as maverick. But times have changed.

In any case, much of what he said rang true. Because of the mass media, he pointed out, psychological pressures on royalty - especially on Diana, and now on her children - have become so intolerable that a normal emotional life is virtually impossible. Yet heirs and heiresses are given no choice about their "vocation". Heredity is a "lottery": there is no guarantee that any particular monarch will be up to the job. Meanwhile the "defender of the faith" role of the monarchy in a post-Anglican society needs re-examining.

Electing heirs to the throne might be good for democracy, writes Ben Pimlott

With some of this, it is hard not to agree. Nobody apart from tabloid editors would quarrel about the pressures. Nor are they new: the great constitutionalist Walter Bagehot made a similar point in the last century, when he argued that a Prince of Wales could be expected to be worse behaved than other people, because of the exceptional temptations of his position. Nor would many (apart from bishops, with bums on House of Lords seats) defend the exclusive relationship between a minority sect - the Church of England - and the head of state.

It was not these points, however, that excited the press, but a single sentence in the middle of the sermon. "In England, until 1213," declared the cleric, "the monarch was elected. Maybe the time is returning for election to the task and role."

Fingers tapped, cyberspace hummed. Well, why not? If we



Popular monarch: The Queen meets residents of Poundbury in Dorset whose homes are built on land belonging to the Duchy of Cornwall

are going to elect Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish assemblies, and a London mayor, if we are to have plebiscites on everything from local government to the future of our currency - why not go the whole hog? Above all - to paraphrase the Canon - it is surely illogical to abolish the hereditary principle of Lords, and not to consider it in relation to heads of state.

However, the cases are not quite the same. The House of Lords is a law-making - or at any rate law-initiating, law-amending, and law-delaying - body. The Monarchy, by contrast, has become almost entirely symbolic. There is also an additional difference. Being hereditary is neither a defining quality of a second chamber, nor a necessary one. It is, however, both a defining and necessary feature of a monarchy.

Canally, Canon James links his idea to ancient tradition. The comparison is false. In Saxon and Norman times, though successions were often disputed, the eldest son had a *prima facie* right, and - where there was a tussle - candidates were restricted to a tiny gene pool. Succeeding kings were not elected by the populace, but "acclaimed". Thus, when a new

ruler presented himself in the capital, citizens of London would roar their approval - a ritual maintained in the modern Coronation Service, which ends with the congregation shouting "May the Queen (or King) live for ever!" But those who had the power to affect a succession were powerful barons, not villains-in-the-street. Today the idea of business moguls (or ministers) making the decision wouldn't go down well.

Neither would a fight between the supporters of rival royals in the hussings. The prospect of fans of the Prince's Trust versus backers of the Save

the Children Fund doesn't sound promising. There is the option of a completely open contest for Buckingham Palace, in which anybody could stand either for a fixed-term occupancy, or as Monarch-for-life. The latter system, however, would entrench out-of-touch gerontocrats, while the former amounts to settling up a republic. That is one option, but it shouldn't be confused with reforming the Monarchy.

For if the institution has any point (and most people still think it has) it is in providing a Head of State who - though subject to regrettable psycho-

logical pressures - is not subject to everyday political ones. A King or Queen who had to worry about re-election would be a president by a different name.

And yet ... There is in the minds of many middle-of-the-road pro-Monarchy people a sense of unease about current arrangements. The system is certainly a lottery - it always has been. Indeed, it is the arbitrariness of heredity as a guiding principle that makes it tolerable. Nevertheless, the notion of elevating an individual to supreme formal authority, without any involvement by the public, maybe regarded as

anomalous in a society increasingly preoccupied with democratic principles.

So perhaps James's words shouldn't be dismissed. The Canon is surely right to say that abdication should be regarded as an honourable choice. Could he also be right in thinking that the Monarchy would be strengthened, not weakened, by a formalised display of public feeling at the beginning of a reign?

Arguably, the referendum - an instrument liberally used for other purposes - could be employed following a royal death to test and reinforce the Monarchy's legitimacy. At present, the throne passes from incumbent to heir at the moment of decease. But what if, hypothetically, the heir or heiress was judged by a majority of the public to be unsuitable? In modern conditions, the lack of any opportunity to voice dissent could seriously undermine the viability of the system. On the other hand, an open vote on the succession would encourage a healthy civic debate.

The beginnings of new reigns are almost always the time when the Monarchy is most popular - nostalgia and hope tend to mingle, in a royalist cocktail. So the risk to a new incumbent would be small, unless of course, there was a serious problem. Thus, medieval royalty may have relevance after all: a revived version of popular acclamation could tie the Monarchy even more securely into our democracy.

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French publishers fight court censors

By John Lichfield
in Paris

SWINGING penalties imposed by the French courts on two investigative books have provoked an outcry in France against judicial curbs on freedom of information. All the country's publishers are threatening to come together to reissue one of the books – an investigation of business corruption – in defiance of the courts.

The publishers say that the unparalleled fierceness of the court penalties would, if allowed to stand, make any form of challenging non-fiction economically suicidal in France. The controversy arises from legal challenges to two books, an investigation of corruption in business tribunals written by a former police officer and an investigation of the murder of a member of parliament, written by two journalists.

In both cases the courts, in Brest and in Toulon, did not ban the entire book. They ordered the publishers to remove several pages which were found to be libellous. What outraged the book industry was the simultaneous decision of

the two courts, 600 miles apart, to impose fierce fines on the publishers for every uncut copy found in the shops. The fines were set at £10,000 a copy in Brest and £1,000 a copy in Toulon – many times the going rate for previous judgments of this kind.

The fines applied instantly – another break with legal precedent – giving the publishers no time to withdraw copies from the shops. In both towns, the court bailiffs were immediately dispatched to tour local book shops and seize offending copies.

The Albin-Michel publishing house, which produced the book called *The Mafia of the Business Tribunals* by the former policeman Antoine Gaudino, faces fines of £580,000. The bailiffs seized 58 copies of the book, at £10,000 a time. The head of the company, Francis Esmeard, said he would appeal but, if his company lost, "it will place our very existence in peril".

The publishing trade federation, the Syndicat National de l'Edition, described the rulings as "exorbitant, disproportionate and prejudicial to freedom of expression". The feder-

ation has protested to the government, which can in theory do nothing since the courts are independent. At a series of crisis meetings in the last two days, the chiefs of the leading French publishing houses have decided to take on the judiciary head on if the appeals are lost later this month.

All French publishers would agree to reissue Mr Gaudino's book in its entirety – challenging the courts to impose even more draconian penalties. The publishers say they accept that there may have been inaccurate or doubtful information in the two books (the other was called *Yann Piat, the Secret History of an Assassination*). But they argue that the nature and scale of the penalties would make it economically suicidal for French publishers to accept any work in the future which investigated political or commercial wrongdoing.

Claude Durand, president of the Fayard publishing house, which is not directly involved, said: "The result will be to impose self-censorship, which is even more pernicious in the long run than censorship itself."



Peace offering: A boy putting flowers on a monument at the Second World War museum in Kiev, Ukraine, together with all the other former Soviet republics, today celebrates the 53rd anniversary of victory
Photograph: Reuters

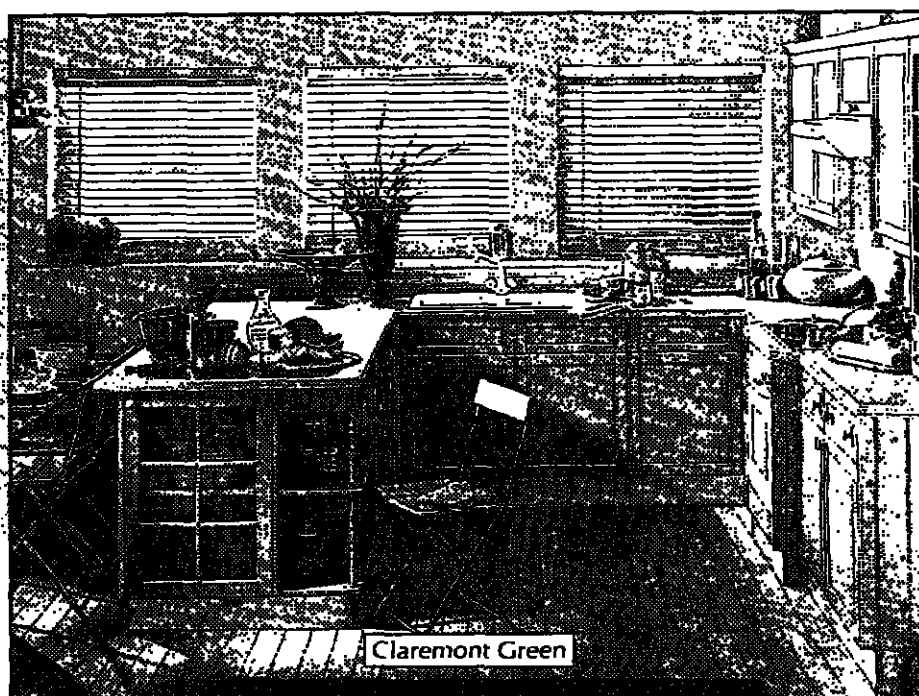
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Russia's racist skinheads terrorise foreigners

RUSSIANS will today hold their annual Victory Day parade in Red Square to celebrate the fact that Hitler and his armies are dead and buried. Would that they could say the same of Nazi ideology and the violence it spawns.

A wave of racist attacks by neo-Nazi skinheads in Moscow is sowing alarm among diplomats and other foreign nationals, and has prompted several embassies to issue warnings to their compatriots.

The mayor of Moscow, Yuri Luzhkov, was yesterday struggling to defuse an outcry over the more serious incident – the stabbing of an Azerbaijani trader, whose death on Thursday prompted 1,500 angry Azerbaijanis to bear his body through the streets, after wrestling it from ambulancemen and smashing the windows of their vehicle. The demonstration was broken up by the police.

Mr Luzhkov, an outspoken nationalist whose administration has a long record of mistreating ethnic minorities, blamed the killing on a business dispute.

The Russian capital was multi-ethnic and "has never resolved ethnic or religious conflicts in such a way," he said. But Azerbaijan's embassy has linked it to neo-Nazi skinheads. In addition, local Azerbaijani traders say the killing was witnessed by police, who did not intervene.

The incident came less than

It is increasingly dangerous to have a dark skin in Moscow, writes
Phil Reeves

a week after a black US marine was badly beaten up by skinheads at a market in the city's Fili Park, a popular haunt among Muscovites who go there to buy bootleg CDs. Minutes after the attack, one of the assailants – the 22-year-old editor of a neo-Nazi newspaper – gave a television interview in which he bragged about beating up black people, saying they were "attracted to his fists like metal to a magnet". Russia's Foreign Ministry condemned the incident as "repulsive".

The assault prompted the

US embassy in Moscow to repeat a warning to Americans of African and Asian ethnicity to be on their guard against Russian skinheads.

The embassy first drew attention to the problem after an even more sickening attack two weeks earlier, in which more than 20 skinheads were seen beating up two young Asian women near the Novy Arbat, a major thoroughfare in central Moscow.

Since then other reports

have surfaced of other race-related attacks on foreigners, which may be linked with a threat by Russia's neo-Nazis to step up such assaults after Hitler's birthday on 20 April.

Neo-Nazi groups remain a brutish minority on the fringe of Russian politics, but they have taken root within a society in which there is a disturbing level of general racism.

Although Russians are often far more curious about, than hostile to, other ethnic groups, racist remarks and anti-Semitic abuse remain common.

Foreign students, several thousands of whom reportedly stopped attending classes following the latest attacks, have long complained of racism. They allege that the police are, at best, indifferent to it and, at worst, take part in beatings. "If you are black in Russia, hardly a day goes by without having to confront racism," wrote Kester Klomegah, a Moscow-based Ghanaian writer, in an article last November.

Officialdom, especially in Moscow, has tended to reinforce the public prejudice by harassing ethnic minorities, particularly those from the former Soviet republics in the Caucasus and Central Asia. Before Moscow's lavish 850th anniversary last year, Caucasian traders were harassed by the police in an effort to keep them off the streets.

Paedophile Briton jailed for 33 years

A BRITISH paedophile who is the son of an Oxford don has been sentenced to 33 years in jail in Thailand after being convicted of sex attacks on young boys.

James Darling was given 48 years at Phuket district court for a string of sexual assaults on boys aged eight to fifteen and separating them from their parents. But his sentence was cut because he pleaded guilty to some of the offences when he was arrested in 1995.

At the hearing Darling, 47, of Edinburgh, son of the late Oxford don and Scottish ornithologist Sir Frank Fraser Darling, issued a statement denouncing Thailand as "an un-reconstructed police state".

He arrived in Thailand four years ago and rented a house close to Rawai Beach, befriending boys from a neighbouring settlement of "sea gypsies". Darling would apparently take them on boat trips to uninhabited islands where he would abuse them.

He was arrested after being reported to police by two organisations, Phuket Child Watch and the Centre for the Protection of Children's Rights, but claimed that he was the victim of a witch hunt. His mother, Lady Christina Darling of



James Darling: Convicted in Thailand, where he arrived four years ago, of sex attacks on boys aged 8 to 15

Forbes, Inverness, died while he was on trial.

In the statement handed out after sentencing he said that his accusers had "convicted themselves of a crime against humanity".

The involvement of Britons in "paedophile tourism" has been a source of enormous concern to the British government, which has tried to co-operate with South-East Asian countries in an attempt to crack down on the problem. Co-operation agreements are already in place in Thailand,

Philippines and Sri Lanka. The Foreign Office said yesterday that it was "looking to see if we can extend this to other countries who are willing to accept our assistance". The co-operation includes help with training local police. British police have been to the three countries, to provide know-how in dealing with the problem.

Robin Cook, the Foreign Secretary, made a point of opening a support centre for victims of paedophilia in the Philippines capital, Manila, while on a visit last year.

US military acts to halt battle of sexes

Britain's armed forces are bringing the sexes together but, chastened by its own experiences, the US is thinking again. Andrew Marshall reports from Washington

GI JOE is back. The toy known as Action Man in Britain, which was deeply unfashionable for so many years, is back on the shelves as an adult toy - sold in limited editions, with special spiffy uniforms.

But GI Joe can't play with GI Jane. That is the view of some of the distinguished men and women of the US Congress, who are trying to make sure that when Americans train for the military, they keep their fingers on their triggers.

The US military has become one of the most integrated professional forces in the world since 1993, when President Clinton cut away a screed of rules that kept women out of key positions. Now, women account for about 20 per cent of the strength of all the armed forces. They fly fighters and bombers, they serve on warships as gunnery officers, and 80 per cent of all jobs are open to them. They cannot (as yet) serve in the tightly confined spaces of submarines, where hot bunking is the rule, and they can't be Navy SEALs, Demi Moore notwithstanding. But everything else, they can and do.

Yet the rise and rise of women in uniform has been accompanied by scandal. The war between the sexes in the US military has become one of its key conflicts over the past few years, with sexual behaviour sometimes seeming as threatening to the Pentagon as Iraqi weapons of mass destruction.

The Navy was torn apart in 1991 by the Tailhook affair, when a gathering of naval aviators in Las Vegas got out of hand, spilling over into public sex and the harassment of women. The Army has had its problems, too, notably with accusations of assault and sexual harassment at the Aberdeen training ground in Maryland, and the scandals surrounding Sergeant Major Gene McKinney, the most senior enlisted man. The Air Force's first woman bomber pilot, Lieutenant Kelly Flynn, was dismissed from the service for fraternisation and committing adultery, and then lying about it. Just yesterday, five naval officers were accused of sexual misconduct and having improper relationships with female cadets at the Navy's only boot camp, the Great Lakes Naval Training Centre, north of Chicago.

Not all of this, by any means, can be laid at the door of sexual integration. The Tailhook affair would have happened whether



Lt Kelly Flynn: dismissed for adultery
Photograph: Sygma

or not women were allowed into the military, and several of the scandals have concerned adulterous liaisons that went on outside the services. But the proliferation of problems and the headline grabbing stories of servicemen behaving badly have inevitably sparked a backlash.

This week, the House National Security Committee shot back. It voted for separate barracks and separate training for men and women, the first indication that the rumble of unhappiness might break out into a war. The kissing has to stop, the committee said: let the shooting start. "All we're trying to do," said Gene Taylor, a Mississippi Democrat, who is one of the key backers of the move, "is get basic training back to basic training, not social experimentation." Roscoe Bartlett, a Maryland Republican, tried to block mixed training last year but got nowhere; now his time may be coming, as support for the measure gathers steam. Mixing the military is something, he says, which "in 5,000 years of recorded history, no successful military has done".

The Spartans, of course, while maintaining an all-male military, were quite keen on having them get as closely acquainted as possible, on the basis that soldiers who had learnt to love each other would fight

together more effectively. But this is probably an argument that President Clinton won't want to get into, with memories of the damaging battles over homosexuality in the military and "Don't ask, don't tell," still fresh in the memory.

"Don't Talk, Don't Touch," is the new rubric. But that doesn't go far enough for opponents of integration, who want to roll back what they see as politically motivated meddling with the military. "The purpose of basic training is not to advance a civilian feminist agenda, or to teach men and women to get along, but to impose a cultural shock that transforms young civilians... into uniformed members of the armed forces," said Elaine Donnelly, the head of the Center for Military Readiness, a Michigan interest group that focuses on the presence of women and homosexuals in the military.

This is only the first skirmish, of course, and the legislation has a long way to go before it passes into law. The military themselves are adamantly opposed to the idea of re-segregating the services, arguing that it makes no sense and will weaken the fighting capability of the units concerned.

Officials at the Great Lakes Training Centre yesterday insisted that male and female recruits could be trained together at the same base. "I think it's a very good thing because we currently have a fleet that is operating successfully today with men and women working together as a team," said Rear Adm. Kevin Green, the Great Lakes commander.

There is a set of practical issues involved here, of course. For instance, a task force earlier this year pointed out that trying to target training at both men and women may make things too tough for some of the women, and not tough enough for some of the men. "Men were not attaining their full potential because they were not being physically challenged enough, and women were suffering injuries at far greater rate than men," says Ms Donnelly.

But the real problem, undoubtedly, in the minds of opponents of integration is sexual. "Coed training and sleeping arrangements have led to rampant sexual indiscipline," said Ms Donnelly.

In the end, it all boils down to that favourite old instruction of British Army Sergeants: hands off cocks, on with socks.



Divided: New moves will see male and female recruits separated at training camps

Photograph: FSP

Hero's voyage ends in Hollywood

A survival story to end all survival stories has just come to light. David Osborne on a true war epic

COMING soon to a screen near you: a story of courage and endurance, a story of one man's escape from his Japanese captors in the Second World War, a story of a journey across 3,000 miles of open ocean in a leaky boat with no water and rations of coconut milk and shark flesh. A story of unbelievable human survival.

Unbelievable but, it seems, true. The star will doubtless be a Hollywood idol - Brad Pitt, perhaps, or Ralph Fiennes - but the hero portrayed will be an American aviator who really existed. He was Lieutenant Damon "Rocky" Gause, a flier with the America's 27th Bombardment Group (Light).

Li Gause did not survive the war. In a final irony, he died in March 1944, not in action, but test-piloting a P47 bomber over the Isle of Wight.

For reasons never determined, he flew nose first into the ground. On the instructions of his father, Li Gause was not returned to the US, but buried alongside victims of both World Wars at the Cambridge American cemetery in Cambridge.

What is about to make "Rocky" Gause one of the most famous heroes of the war years, however, all happened in the South China Sea two years earlier. Almost as remarkable as the story itself is the manner in which it has come to light today. Throughout his odyssey from the Philippines all the way to Australia, Li Gause scribbled notes, which he later rewrote as a seamless journal entitled "By the Grace of God and the Filipino People". Accompanying it are photographs taken with a box camera and eight rolls of film.



Close shave: Damon Gause gets a haircut after his remarkable escape to Australia
Photograph: Suncliffe News/Features

The journal and pictures remained intact in an Air Force footlocker shipped back to his widow and only son, Damon Jr, in Georgia in 1944. There it remained undisturbed for more than 50 years, until the widow, who is still living, gave her son permission to publicise its existence and contents.

It was in contacting a New York literary agent, Mary Taban, that Mr Gause ensured his father's odyssey would finally be unveiled. The journal opens in December 1941 when Li Gause arrives in Manila just before its fall to the Japanese. The incredible journey really begins in April 1942, however, when, after a knifing a prison guard, he escaped captivity and swam three miles to the island of Corregidor in Manila Bay. Corregidor, however, fell on 6 May and Gause was forced to flee once more.

Gause made it first back to Luzon, half by boat and half swimming, before washing up soon afterwards on the island of Mindoro to the south. There, in deep jungle, he met an American Army Captain, William Osborne. Together, they resolved to make it all the

way to Australia in a dilapidated 22ft boat with a diesel engine that ran, but only sporadically.

What followed was a series of incidents and visits to tiny islands along the way that makes even the story of *Papillon* seem pale. They raided a Japanese lighthouse for fuel for the engine and food, killing a Japanese sentry. Love and sex, those other vital Hollywood ingredients, also feature. "There is a love affair there," confirmed Ms Taban, that happened during the boat journey.

One stop was at a leper colony on the island of Bugsanga, where an American marine engineer, suffering from the disease, helped them repair their sputtering engine. On another island, a woman missionary gave them shelter and provided Gause with the camera and rolls and film.

Finally, 159 days after first setting sail, Gause and Osborne washed up in Wyndham, Australia, 300 miles to the southwest of Darwin. Disbelieving Australian servicemen took them in.

"Rocky" Gause became, in fact, the first genuine American hero of the war, feted in front

page articles, still available from archives, in the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*.

He was shipped home to Georgia where he remained just long enough to attend the birth of his son Damon Jr. He begged to be allowed back to the war, however. And, in late 1943, with his son just one day old, he found himself dispatched to the Isle of Wight and a mission to test P47s to see if they could stand up aerodynamically to being used as dive-bombers.

Incredible as the tale may be, it stands up to all scrutiny, insists Ms Taban.

Some of those named in the journal who are still living have been contacted for their memories of Gause and his companion, Osborne. "There are several survivors who can give an eyewitness account", she said yesterday.

Ms Taban hopes to conclude the auction soon. It cannot be long, before the full, astonishing, story of Lieutenant Gause, lying today beneath the grass in Cambridge, England, becomes fully known to us all, in book form first and surely, quickly thereafter, on the silver screen.



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Clinton risks Israel's anger to woo US Arabs

By Mary Dejevsky
in Washington

AS President Clinton's special envoy to the Middle East arrived in Israel to prod prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu into meeting Monday's deadline, Mr Clinton was ratcheting up the pressure from Washington.

After the inconclusive London talks earlier in the week, the US Secretary of State, Madeleine Albright, had threatened that if Mr Netanyahu would not cede land to the Palestinians, Washington could re-examine its whole Middle East policy. In appeals and veiled threats, Mr Clinton has reinforced the message that if there is no agreement, the future of the Oslo accords is in question.

Over 48 hours, Mr Clinton illustrated what that could mean. On Thursday night he became the first serving President to address a gathering of Arab-Americans. To an ecstatic welcome, Mr Clinton told a dinner attended by more than 750 members of the US Arab community what was at stake.

"In almost every area of human endeavour, opportunities do not last forever," he said. "They must be seized, and I

hope this one will be... we have got to get this done." Mr Clinton's words were clearly addressed more to Israelis than Palestinians, as the Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat has already accepted the terms for Monday's proposed meeting in Washington.

Earlier that day it became known Hillary Clinton had spoken with approval of Palestinian statehood. She told a US-sponsored youth camp in Switzerland by satellite that "it will be in the long-term interests of the Middle East for Palestine to be a state."

A flurry of qualifications followed: it was her "personal view", her spokeswoman, Marsha Berry, said, "and US policy is unchanged". "She was not reflecting any administration policy," said the White House spokesman, Mike McCurry. He denied it was "part of a calculated strategy".

But Mrs Clinton is no novice in foreign affairs (she has acted as unofficial presidential envoy on numerous occasions) and yields little to her husband in political acumen. And few were deceived. While Jewish American groups condemned her remarks, the President of the Arab-American Institute

in Washington, James Zogby, congratulated her on "helping to break the taboo".

Mr Clinton, for his part, used each and every public appearance to chivy Mr Netanyahu into making the concession on land that would make the planned talks in Washington on Monday worthwhile. He denied Israel was facing an ultimatum: "What we are trying to do is to get the parties over a hurdle so... we can stay on the timetable established a few years ago by both the Palestinians and the Israelis to finish the whole thing by this month next year," he said.

Responding to cries of foul from sections of Congress, where the Republican Speaker of the House of Representatives had accused Mr Clinton of siding with the Palestinians and "bullying" Israel, he said: "There is no way in the world I could impose an agreement on them or dictate their security to them". If Mr Clinton had to tread warily with Congress, he hardly had to apologise to the Jewish lobby outside Congress. Divided about Mr Netanyahu's policy, American Jews were largely silent, and some Jewish leaders said that they continued to support US policy.



The body of John Joseph, Bishop of Faisalabad, who shot himself over the death sentence on a fellow Catholic who allegedly praised Salman Rushdie

Riots at suicide bishop's memorial

THE procession in memory of the Pakistani bishop who killed himself in protest at the sentencing to death of a fellow Catholic turned violent yesterday when police fired into a crowd of furious mourners, wounding several.

John Joseph, Bishop of Faisalabad, 150 miles from the capital, Islamabad, shot himself

Marcus Tanner on the violent feelings aroused by the self-sacrifice of a cleric who fought religious persecution

on Thursday in the court building where Ayub Masih was condemned to death last month for allegedly praising Salman Rushdie, author of *The Satanic Verses*. The bishop was a

long-standing, vociferous opponent of Pakistan's blasphemy laws, passed in the early Nineties under the former leader General Zia and which stipulate the death sentence

for those defiling the name of the Prophet Muhammad. They have been criticised by human-rights groups as being vaguely worded and thus liable to be used to intimidate the country's small non-Muslim minority.

The clashes yesterday started after 2,000 mourners formed a procession to take the coffin to the cathedral in Faisalabad, where the funeral is to be held tomorrow. Many were chanting slogans against Zia and the religious law.

Police and mourners traded accusations over who initiated the clash. The city's police chief said his men came under attack first from a hail of stones, while the mourners said the stone-throwing started on the police side. As the police fired over - and into - the crowd, several mourners were hit, including a young girl shot in the stomach. The rest of the crowd fled into

the cathedral, which the police surrounded.

The clashes and the bishop's gesture of self-sacrifice are unlikely to achieve their object of forcing Pakistan to repeal its religious laws.

They are intended only to protest Islam and not oppress other faiths - according to the government.

The US yesterday repeated its call for the government to drop the case against Ayub Masih and repeal the laws.

Christians form a small, impotent community in Pakistan. Many are descendants of the poorest sections of the community who accepted the faith of European missionaries in the 18th and 19th centuries and are thus open to the charge of accepting the religion of the colonial oppressor.

The object of the bishop's gesture of self-sacrifice is in jail pending an appeal. His family a target for Islamic militants. Bashiran Bibi, his mother, said her entire family had had to leave their village.

Fresh sanctions against Belgrade as crisis deepens

By Rupert Cornwell

THE escalating crisis in Kosovo was poised to dominate the discussions among the world's major powers in London which began last night, as Yugoslavia rejected international mediation in the crisis, and further sanctions were set to start against the Belgrade regime.

The formal setting was a meeting of foreign ministers ahead of next weekend's annual G8 summit, to be held in Birmingham. But the six G8 countries which make up the Contact Group - Italy, France, Germany, Britain, Russia and the United States - are convening separately to decide what further pressure to exert on President Slobodan Milosevic.

As matters stand, earlier sanctions - which include a freeze of Yugoslav foreign assets and a suspension of International Monetary Fund credits - are due to be joined today by a ban on foreign investment in Serbia, a step which the West believes could hit hard at Mr Milosevic's efforts to revive the struggling economy.

Yesterday, Belgrade for-

mally turned down a mission by the Contact Group's appointed mediator, the former Spanish prime minister Felipe Gonzalez, and the new curbs seem inevitable. Russia however will again not take part and Mr Milosevic, diplomats acknowledge, is likely to remain intransigent for a while yet. "We're going into this with our eyes open," a British diplomat said this week.

Other topics for the G8 include the Middle East, where Madeleine Albright, the US Secretary of State, will be presenting a bleak assessment of progress in the Israeli-Palestinian talks, and the delicate negotiations over the shape of the permanent international criminal court under United Nations auspices, which should be set up this summer.

Nigeria will also be on the agenda. Ministers will condemn the continuing failure of the military government in Africa's largest country to restore democracy. But they will probably also examine further sanctions, including action against Nigeria's oil exports. No final decision, however, is expected.

Pope to beatify Croatian archbishop

IN A controversial gesture, the Pope will beatify a Croatian archbishop seen as a hero to Croats but who is a bare figure in neighbouring Serbia, writes Marcus Tanner.

Alojzije Stepinac, archbishop of Zagreb during Yugoslavia's darkest hours in the Second World War, was tried after the victory of Josip Tito's Communist partisans for supporting the Nazi-backed Independent Croatian state. Under that regime, led

by the dictator Ante Pavelic, Serbs, Jews and gypsies were persecuted and tens of thousands - if not more - killed in pogroms and camps.

Most Croats thought Stepinac's trial in 1946 was a show trial and that his real crime was not collaboration with fascists but outspoken anti-Communism. Before his death, under house arrest in 1960, he had become a virtual saint in the eyes of Croatia's Catholic majority.

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Italy declares emergency in landslide region

ITALY yesterday declared a state of emergency for the Campania region, and earmarked 50 billion lire (£18m) for patching up the worst of the damage done by landslides which killed at least 87 people earlier this week.

The money will go some way towards putting roofs back over the heads of the 2,000-odd people whose homes were destroyed by the massive river of mud and detritus driven by heavy rain down the mountainside into the Sarno valley. It will contribute towards the cost of reopening shops and businesses in the area.

It will not, however, even start to pay for the work necessary to prevent the many other geological disasters waiting to happen in Campania and all over Italy.

"We need 65 trillion lire over the next 10 years to get territory which has been plundered for the last 30 years back into shape," said Green party MP Anna Maria Procacci. "We need it now. The Sarno disaster marks a point of no return."

In a dossier released by the Legambiente environmental watchdog in January 1997, the Sarno valley was singled out as "a high-risk zone for environmental crises".

The river Sarno, the report

The Mafia and deforestation led to floods and devastation, writes Anne Hanley

the region's capital, Naples, 60 per cent of the city may collapse into the underlying labyrinth of caves, experts say.

"Though Campania is bad, it's not the only region which is susceptible to this kind of natural disaster," said Mr Realacci, who cited the northern regions of Piedmont, Liguria and Emilia Romagna as other possible crisis points. "And just look at Florence: the city suffered chronic flooding in 1966, but almost nothing has been done. If we had a repetition of that freak rainfall now, Florence would be completely under water. Up-river, money has been spent badly, and the situation has worsened since then."

The problem, environmentalists agree, is not so much of funds or the lack of them, but of lack of a coherent policy to ensure that the country is in a fit state to cope with what nature throws at it.

"Successive governments have sidelined the issue of land management," said Ms Procacci, whose Green party is part of the governing coalition. "For years and years, it has been underestimated, and our leaders have been able to get away with it because the Italian people as a whole seem unable to grasp the fact that their very security depends on looking after the land."

The tragedy in the Sarno valley must, she said, make land zoning and management a priority. "We have a great law in this country which we pushed through parliament in 1989, forcing local councils to draw up comprehensive plans for the protection of their territory, with proper building zones, river flood plains protected, and all the other measures needed to ensure that the land is respected," she said. "The problem is, it has never been implemented. In Sarno, for example, 20 per cent of the houses were built without permission."

The Greens are calling for a one-year plan to deal with the most pressing emergencies plus a long-term project for putting to rights the thousands of mainly man-made environmental problems which have arisen over the past three decades. "If nothing else, the Sarno disaster might wake people up to the dangers," Ms Procacci said.

The task, however, will be a difficult one, and, as Mr Realacci pointed out, it will take a lot of lateral thinking to en-

sure that Italy's population is safe from natural disasters.

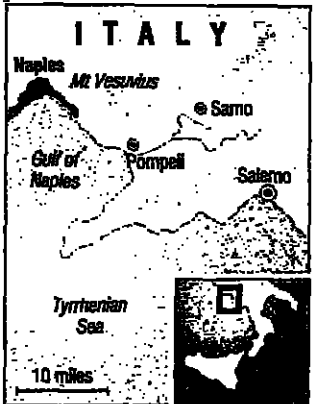
In Quindici, for example, they should have been using part of the funds they had on incentives for people to leave homes which now lie buried under tons of mud, he said. "I dread to think what will happen to the thousands of people living high up the slopes of Vesuvius when that volcano goes off. There's no way they can be evacuated," he added.

It is also, he said, a question of instilling pride. "I look around me and I see the ugliness we have brought to our beautiful country. It's all part of the same process. We need to teach Italians to care about the land they live on."



Rescue workers still digging yesterday after four days for those missing beneath the mud and detritus in Sarno

Photograph: Reuters



said, had dwindled to a trickle of noxious froth, the river bed had been cemented over, the clay soil of the surrounding mountains had been rendered dangerously loose by fires and deforestation, and houses had been built up hill-sides which had been identified as landslide zones.

"The fact that no steps were taken to remedy this situation," said Ernesto Realacci, Legambiente's chairman, "is hardly surprising. This is an area dominated by organised crime. In Quindici, one of the worst-affected villages, town council elections have been called off year after year because no one dares to stand against the official candidates of the Greziano clan."

The Sarno situation is the tip of a vast iceberg, which costs Italy 8 trillion lire a year to patch up as mountainsides collapse, rivers flood, and earthquakes damage buildings. In the Campania region alone, 24 per cent of territory is considered high-risk. In



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N Koreans threaten to renege on nuclear deal

NORTH KOREA accused the US of failing to keep a 1994 deal and said it may refuse safely to store 8,000 plutonium-laced nuclear fuel-rods. It would seriously breach a pact in which the country agreed to freeze and eventually dismantle its suspect nuclear-weapons programme. US experts have been working in North Korea since 1996 to encase the spent rods for safe storage. They were removed from the North's only operational reactor in the early 1990s and temporarily stored in a cooling pond.

— AP, Seoul

Nigerian activist seized

THE leader of Nigeria's main opposition, United Action for Democracy, Olisa Agbakoba, has been detained, colleagues said yesterday. "He was arrested this morning at Lagos airport on his way back from a trip abroad," one said.

— Reuters, Lagos

SA may miss Hamas visit

A PROPOSED visit by the militant Palestinian leader Sheikh Ahmed Yassin has been postponed because South Africa has not yet given him a visa. He is founder and spiritual leader of Hamas, which rejects the Israeli-Palestinian peace agreements. He is touring Middle East and Asian nations that so far have included Syria, Iran, Egypt, Saudi Arabia and Qatar.

— AP, Cape Town

Romania eases anti-gay law

ROMANIA adopted draft legislation decriminalising homosexual activity and dropping a law used to hamper media. They must be approved by both chambers of parliament. If the draft becomes law, homosexual sex will be punished only if it involves a minor under 14 or rape.

— AP, Bucharest



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More openness, please, Mr Cook

THE LETTER that Sandline International's lawyers sent to the Foreign Secretary a fortnight ago, and now in the public domain, seems to suggest that the official contacts with this firm of "military consultants" were much more extensive than was previously thought. Tony Lloyd, the Foreign Office minister, has "points to correct" in his evidence to MPs about the Government's role. All this raises once again the way that ministers have handled the Sierra Leone issue. Naturally any firm judgement on the behaviour of ministers and officials must await the various inquiries now under way. But we can at this stage say that even if those involved were complicit, they need not feel that they are defenceless.

Politically complex, the moral questions posed by events in Sierra Leone are straightforward: the democratically-elected government was ousted by a military dictator, and Britain appears to have covertly assisted the legitimate government in returning to power. The problem was the wording of a United Nations resolution imposing sanctions on the African country as an expression of the world's disapproval. The effect was to prevent aid going to the ousted President, Ahmad Tejan Kabbah.

If Britain is to run an ethical foreign policy, it should include helping restore legitimate democratic rulers where possible. But preferably without subterfuge. Mr Cook should in future try to ensure that the UN's knee-jerk reaction – an arms embargo – is tempered by the need for flexibility when dealing with genocidal, illegal regimes. He should also try more openness in his approach.

Time for change in local voting

FEWER PEOPLE turned out to vote in Thursday's local elections than in any comparable democratic contest in modern times. Obviously this is not a "good thing". But a closer examination of the evidence suggests that democracy is not quite approaching the collapse some would have us believe.

One powerful explanation for the low rate of participation lies in the "nationalisation" of local elections. In recent decades they have become an excellent vehicle for the disgruntled voter to punish an unpopular government. Politicians can't easily rubbish them as they do the opinion polls or by-elections. Unsuccessful leaders have to answer to armies of walking wounded ex-councillors. The trend became more pronounced over this decade, starting with the protest over the poll tax in 1990 which contributed to the downfall of Margaret Thatcher. Then local elections became referendums on the personal fate of John Major. Many perfectly blameless Tory councillors saw their careers end this way.

Most of the nation, however, got its protesting out of its system with the election of Tony Blair's government. Happily for him the local elections came after a fortnight of coverage about his unprecedented popularity. People registered their content with the state of national politics by simply staying at home. This is not inevitable. We can be sure that if Mr Blair had announced an Abolition of the World Cup (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill on the morning of 7 May then things might have been different.

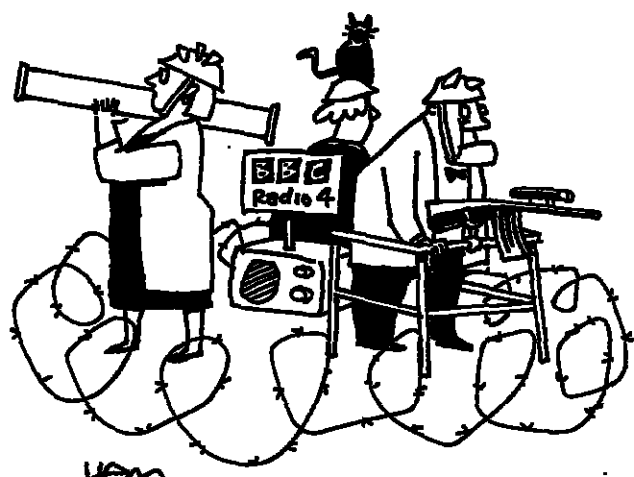
So this year, in the absence of a protest vote, and with the content majority abstaining, those who did actually bother to turn out did so for the right – local – reasons. The diverse pattern of results suggests, as Professor Anthony King observed, that these were the most "local" of local elections. Labour, for example, found itself struggling in Hackney, where it has been embroiled in a rather distasteful scandal, but making surprising progress in Harrow. The Liberal Democrats could take the leader of Sheffield Council's seat on the same night as their deputy leader on the Isle of Wight took a nasty tumble. The Conservatives were able to make up ground in Battersea whilst they lost Bromley.

This proves that it is possible for local contests to be fought on local issues. Nevertheless, turnout figures this low cannot be good for the long-term health of our democracy. The proposed reforms of local democracy and introduction of directly elected mayors will help re-invigorate local democracy. Mr Blair should speed up his reforms. He may not have much time before the protest voters return to boost the turnout figures for all the wrong reasons.

Safe new Radio 4

"SOLE LUNDY, Fastnet, Irish Sea..." As listeners, viewers and readers, we are conservative creatures. But the Radio 4 audience is the most conservative of all. They represent a sort of National Trust of the airwaves, devoted to the preservation of the fabric of broadcasting schedules. Accidental survivals from an earlier age are treated with reverence. The shipping forecast, the six o'clock songs, the seagulls on Roy Plomley's desert island. Millions of domestic routines have been displaced by the shifting of *The Archers*. Millions of ears have been offended by "30 minutes of news and comment from the BBC" instead of the 40 of *The World At One*.

And yet... the surprising thing about the changes brought in by James Boyle, controller of Radio 4, is how little protest there has been. Now, a



month on from the small earthquake we can add: not many hurt. This is an extraordinary achievement for Mr Boyle. Remember how the BBC was forced to back down by the Save Radio 4 Long Wave campaign in 1993? Mr Boyle does. And he prepared the ground for his frankly modest renovations of the national monument with care, pre-empting the fuss, taking the Radio 4 Roadshow to middle England and squaring the Speaker of the House of Commons over the changes to parliamentary coverage.

So what of the reforms? Some of them are good, some not so good. John Peel's programme about families on Saturday morning, for example, is excellent, but starting the news just before 9am instead of on the hour is highly irritating. Letters to the BBC's own *Feedback* are running strongly against the changes but, as ever, the contented tend not to write in. What is significant is that middle England has not marched on Broadcasting House to protest. They are sleeping safely in their beds, soothed by familiar litanies. "Rockall, Malin, Hebrides..."



'Baggy-trousered urban surfers disporting themselves on concrete shores' – the best way to un-grey Britain? (see letter below right)

Photograph: Rex Features

Middle East's tragedy

Sir: If ever a single picture epitomised the tragedy of the Middle East, Paul Hackett's portrait of Yasser Arafat (6 May) surely does.

Mr Arafat has been a tireless campaigner on behalf of his people all his life. The futility of armed struggle against the USA's premier client state in the Middle East has been repeatedly brought home to the Palestinian community, and in Oslo the diplomatic option seemed to have paid off.

The murder of Yitzhak Rabin, the only Israeli statesman to have the courage to grasp the nettle of peace with honour, and Benjamin Netanyahu's subsequent arrogant denial of both the letter and spirit of the 1993 Oslo accords, point to one crushing-salient fact: Israel, supported by the US, can ignore the "peace process" with impunity, and is free to pursue its own agenda of accelerated settlement, the economic isolation of Palestinian territory and the acquisition of state-of-the-art military technology with which to browbeat its neighbours. If ever there was a man caught between a rock and a hard place, it is Mr Arafat.

It is high time that the likes of Robin Cook and Madeleine Albright stopped pandering to Mr Netanyahu and dismissed the "peace process" as the distraction it is while the Zionists relentlessly pursue their morbid dreams. The state of Israel has been an unmitigated and unholy disaster for the entire Middle East since its inception 50 years ago, and as protagonists in the whole debacle we British should assume our responsibilities and take the centre of the stage.

It is time to start the healing process. Accept the fact that the Palestinians have been dispossessed of their homeland. Acknowledge the fact that hundreds of thousands of Palestinians languish in squalid refugee camps whilst Uzi-toting settlers build homes on appropriated lands.

Sadly we cannot turn back the clock and avert the Holocaust, but we must start looking for solutions in Palestine that do not simply legitimise Zionist aggression and trample legitimate Palestinian aspirations. Yasser Arafat is an old, frail and unloved man in the world today, and we owe his people something to make him smile.

STEVE RAZZETTI
Hesket Newmarket, Cumbria

Why I didn't vote

Sir: My choice not to vote in the London referendum had nothing whatever to do with either apathy or complacency, but was based on the fact that, whichever answer I gave, it would convey a meaning I did not intend.

I firmly believe that London needs an overall strategy and that the present system is failing the citizens miserably. On this basis you might say I should have voted "Yes".

But I could get no satisfactory answers to questions about the proposed Mayor's accountability. The Government's documentation is deliberately vague. The White Paper summary states: "The Assembly would question the Mayor on his or her activities [and] would agree or suggest changes to the Mayor's plans". But what will happen if they don't agree or endorse the Mayor's plans? Will the Assembly be so powerless that they are just the Mayor's puppets?

The Mayor is likely to be elected on personality and charisma rather than on party political lines,

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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whereas in the present political climate the Assembly will probably incline towards New Labour. If the Mayor's ideas do not reflect those of the Assembly there is potential for conflict and even stalemate.

Most people who voted "No" did so because they would end up paying out more money for bureaucracy. If I had voted "No", this would have been interpreted as meaning either that I don't want to contribute towards improving London, or that I am satisfied with the way things are now – both of which are untrue.

SUSAN ESTERMANN
London NW6

Sir: Low turnout in local elections will be blamed on the polling stations being in the wrong place. It would apparently be better if they were all in supermarkets.

It couldn't be that all the main parties looked identical in most parts of the country and so there wasn't much of a choice for voters?

It couldn't be that most powers have been removed from local government and so there isn't much to vote for?

And it couldn't be that the spin-doctors want fewer elections, just for the occasional Mayor (and Prime Minister?) who can be trusted to do everything for us?

A one-stop shop indeed.
JOHN NICHOLSON
Manchester

Act now to avert famine

Sir: As an agency that has worked in Sudan for over 20 years, Cafod was deeply concerned at some of the assertions made in the article "Is there really a famine in Sudan?" (7 May).

It's all too easy to sit in London and play the numbers game, debating where a humanitarian crisis ends and a famine begins. In the meantime people are put at ever-greater risk of dying as each day passes without sufficient aid getting through to them.

We reject the claim that "famine fatigue" might set in if the crisis is highlighted before it becomes a full-blown tragedy. As Cafod has seen from the early response to our appeal, the British public is more interested in prevention and is willing to contribute to a programme that can avert disaster.

The next few weeks are crucial for the people of Sudan. After that the rains will begin and it will be very difficult to reach the people at greatest risk of starvation. However, if we can get enough food through now,

it may be possible to sustain people until the August harvest.

Because we work with the local church structures we do not need to set up feeding centres or relief shelters, because we can reach the people in their villages. Therefore our relief work is not encouraging people to leave their homes to get food.

Cafod has received an urgent appeal from our church partners in Sudan, who have told us that people now face starvation. As a direct response we have appealed to our supporters for £1m. We believe that the public would prefer to respond now rather than wait until later in the year when there may be more deaths.

PAT JONES
Deputy Director Cafod
London SW9

Nappies: a plastic peril?

Sir: Vanya Body (letter, 2 May) is to be commended even for considering using "real" nappies rather than disposables, and if she asks women old enough actually to have used the things she may get a more positive response than from her contemporaries.

Eleven years ago I chose to wash nappies rather than throw them out, and at a rough estimate the nappy-bucket routine takes about ten minutes a day. The pressure to use disposables comes from the current obsession with "convenience" at all costs, and from the simple fact that disposables are big business.

So far as I am aware, by the way, the 19th-century public hygiene laws which prohibited the disposal of raw human excrement in public waste are still in force. Would someone advise me whether every user of disposable nappies is in fact breaking the law, and is this the basis for a counter-attack on the plastic peril?

STHURSFIELD
Oswestry, Shropshire

Sir: Could someone please explain to me just how "clean" re-usable nappies are? No-one seems to mention what happens to the vile chemicals used to sanitise them. Neither does anyone take account of the pollution created at power stations to deliver "clean" electricity to heat water to amazing temperatures to wash them.

Do any of these re-usable nappies get a quick spin (electricity/gas again) to fluff them up? Do any of these parents resort to the tumble drier or central heating radiators (driven by fuels that change our atmosphere) after the sort of wet week I've just had?

ANT HARRIS
High Peak, Cumbria

Drinking and driving

Sir: The Government is proposing to reduce the drink / drive limit to 50mg, or one pint of beer, in the interests of reducing the annual road death toll.

British roads are the safest in Europe. In countries like France and Germany, where they have the 50mg limit, there are two and three times more drink/drive fatalities. In the UK, most of the worst road accident fatalities are caused by drivers who are two or three times over the current limit. They are the real villains of the piece, not the average motorist who drinks and drives within the existing law.

The Government proposes an automatic one-year ban for exceeding a 50mg limit. This would result in thousands of motorists not only losing their licences, but in many cases their livelihoods as well, not to mention the social stigma of being a "drunk driver", for drinking a pint and a half of beer.

If these proposals become law, there will be nationwide resentment, particularly in the countryside where many public houses rely on passing trade for the majority of their income and may face closure. This will also have a detrimental effect on the quality of life of everybody who lives and works in rural areas.

S FERGUSON
Edinburgh

Britain's strong pound

Sir: Prior to my recently moving house, I unearthed an old (1971) newspaper from the days before *The Independent* was born.

The exchange rates quoted in it for the pound sterling included the following: 8.37 Deutschmarks, 13.56 French francs, 118.00 Belgian francs, 9.73 Swiss francs, 8.50 Dutch guilders, 17.06 Norwegian kroner, 18.12 Danish kroner, and 61.00 Austrian schillings. (The "Bank Rate" was 6 per cent).

Strong pound? And are we commensurately more competitive than in 1971? I doubt it.

H J HARLEY
Taunton, Somerset

Just say yes

Sir: Both Tim Beach (letter, 2 May) and Derek Stapley (letter, 8 May) miss the mark. The fact of predilection (or its being part of God's creation) is irrelevant to the justification of a sexual act. The only thing that should count is consent.

MICHAEL BRYANT
Carnforth, Lancashire

QUOTE UNQUOTE

"I was taught by a boss 20 years ago that if you are going to preach madness, better show up in a conservative suit." — Tom Peters, American management guru.

"I always say that if there is something detrimental, derogatory or otherwise ghastly to do, I will be the person made to do it." — Ulrika Jonsson, TV personality.

"Most guys think women in the military aren't attractive. I wanted to show my feminine side." — Lieutenant Frederica Spilman, of the US Navy who was reprimanded for posing topless in Playboy.

"I like a bit of rough, a bit of crumpled at the edges in men." — Jackie Ballard, Liberal Democrat MP.

"It's funny these people like Ben Elton suddenly criticising New Labour. I think it is the first-ever recorded case of rats leaving a floating ship." — Alexei Sayle, comedian.

"Not for a second does it occur to these poor boots that the democratic right to vote includes the democratic right not to vote on the grounds that they are a confederation of dullards and busybodies hellbent on stopping people doing things." — Keith Waterhouse, on being pestered to vote.

Let the skateboarders rip

Sir: Having recently returned from a term's sabbatical leave in Australia, and still reeling from climate- and culture-shock, I felt consoled and encouraged to see, on Sunday afternoon, a battalion of young skateboarders exercising their risky art on the steps and slopes of Cambridge University's Sidgwick Avenue site. Except for a few ghostly academics, this area is effectively depopulated at the weekend. It is, to all intents and purposes, an empty space, almost ideally designed for the pursuit of skateboarding. Needless to add, it is also plastered with signs saying, "No Skateboarding".

Quite rightly, no one was taking a blind bit of notice of this bureaucratic nonsense. For a moment, I was led to think that grey old England was at last starting to come alive. My seven-year-old son remarked, "This place is fun", something which has not often been said of the home of the Classics, History, and Modern and Medieval Languages Faculties. We were both wrong. It was not long before some censorious professor called time on all the excitement and one of the university's official sports (garbed in a fluorescent raincoat) arrived to shoo everyone away and restore the faculties to their state of funeral Sunday calm.

This was a miniature tragedy. The University is missing a golden opportunity here to bridge the old town/gown barrier. We are wasting a space whose architecture can only be redeemed by having baggy-trousered urban surfers disporting themselves on its concrete shores. And, at no cost, we could be increasing the cheerfulness of the nation. But no – we would rather stamp it out.

In a spirit of renewal, let us take down those prohibitive signs and let the skateboarders rip. And where the University leads, a few other tired institutions – the British Museum, the National Theatre, for example – might follow. This could be the beginning of the un-greying of Britain.

Dr ANDY MARTIN
Lecturer in French
University of Cambridge

A better life for animals

Sir: After the RSPCA week in which we have been reminded of the incredible cruelty to some animals, may I suggest a way forward?

We have instruction and a test when we want to drive a car; we have some rudimentary classes when children are brought into the world – but most people who take on an animal have no idea how to care for it or train it.

I would like to see the reintroduction of a licence like the dog licence, but one covering all animals, and a mandatory course of training with each new animal. If owners are cruel to the animal a court could withdraw the licence and take the animal into care for rehoming. The price of the licence should be at least £50 for the life of that animal.

GRAHAM HOWES
London N19

Challenge to the church

Sir: Your article "Is it now time to elect the monarchy?" (8 May) raises the question: is it now time to elect canons of the Church of England? They are chosen without reference to ordinary churchgoers like myself, who do not even have a direct vote for members of the Synod.

JENNIFER MILLER
London SW15

Cover me in Lycra, put me on the pitch, and – hey presto



DAVID
AARONOVITCH
ON SEX, SPORT AND
THE HARD SELL

YOU MIGHT mistake it for a Lolita ad. The teenage girl lies on her front, wearing a sleek black off-the-shoulder number, her eyes looking directly at you, and just the hint of a half-lascivious, half-scornful smile on her cherry red lips. "8.30 pm," runs the accompanying text, "my place."

Mmmm. We all know what is being promised here, don't we? And it sure as hell ain't a game of hockey. Except, of course, that a game of hockey is exactly what is on offer. The girl is 18 year old England hockey international, Lucilla Wright, her "place" is a stadium in Milton Keynes, and the ad goes on (in small letters) to give details of how to obtain tickets.

It has, however, as you might expect, caused some discussion within the English Hockey Association. The EHA president, Mrs Monica Pickersgill, was initially opposed to its appearing in a local magazine, but has subsequently been talked round. Not least by a Mr Ian Thomas, the EHA's marketing director, who revealed that England's Aussie opponents in the match (the imaginatively titled "Hockey-rocs") will take to the field dressed, not in pleated skirt and aertex polo-necks, but in "all-in-one Lycra kit".

Lycra is, of course, the material that saved cycling as a spectator sport, and made men's athletics a must-watch for today's woman. On a shapely and vigorous person its adaptation to the most intimate contours of the body provides a focus for spectator attention whenever the sporting action flags. Or even when it doesn't. Lycra, as we know, follows each undulation, drops into the smallest indentation, emphasises every teeny pucker, and moulds itself around the firm semi-circle of... Whoah! That's quite enough of that. What do you think this is, Playboy? Loaded? Hockey Monthly? Get a grip!

If cycling and sprinting have been

succoured by sex, so has soccer. Ginola of the petulant lips and flowing locks has become a pin-up, as has David Beckham, he of the impossible combination of DiCaprio features and vigorous, lusty thighs. He could sire forty healthy children for you, and still look like your own son.

But some sports have an easier job than others when it comes to selling sensuality. The problem for hockey is that it is associated with tree-trunk thighs, hefty gym mistresses, painful (and, for most people, necessarily unsexual) blows to the knees and ankles, bullying-off, loud shouts of "ovah heah Madgel!" and women called Mrs Pickersgill.

Nevertheless that co-option of implied naughtiness is exactly what young Lucilla is after. With the brutal truthfulness of your average 18-year-old she states that her aim is to show that "normal, sexy, boy-interested girls play hockey, and you don't have to look like a horse." Lucilla's photograph, by the way, shows a most unequine set of features.

This is all very hard on the generations of women who have been horse looking, abnormal, lesbian (or simply uninterested in boys), or whose looks have not been what social convention has declared to be "sexy" – and who have generally been the bedrock of English hockey. As an unconventionally sexy person myself – whose appearance in all-in-one Lycra would certainly stop any contest dead – I feel for them. Besides, perhaps Lucilla is too young to know this, but there are plenty of men (and not a few women) who are rather attracted to lesbians.

Well then, here it comes, the question that you all knew I was bound to ask. Which is, naturally, where will it end? Is there any sport or activity that cannot be sold on the basis of the opportunity to watch fine young bodies disport themselves around in a fine pheromonal mist? And is there any limit to how sports will exploit the sex appeal of competitors?

It might be hard, for instance, to stoke up smouldering passions about the leading practitioners of the sport of darts. Dressing the Jocky Wilsons in skin-tight gear is not going to help, for – paradoxically – the larger the undulation, the less the desire to encounter it in detail. And besides, they wouldn't have anywhere to put their Woodbines.

The Winter Olympics proved that curling has a similar rebranding problem (although sledging, with all that lying down and hurtling round corners, doesn't). Will the British Curling Association sanction naked men or women sitting astride those flat sliding things (or stones, as they are known), as they slip slowly – oh, so slowly – over the cold ice? I think not.

Mind you, at the '96 Olympic Games, Belorussian gymnast Svetlana Boginskaya was nicknamed "the minx from Minsk" for her interesting floor exercise, as she writhed and wriggled in an apparent ecstasy of something or other. Any sport that includes music and routines is ripe for exploitation.

My own choices for a successful revamp would be Dressage and Showjumping. Horsemanship might be thought to look unglaucous on a hockey player, but it looks pretty good on a horse. Place upon the back of that magnificent animal a young woman, clad only in knee length black leather boots and strategically placed ringlets, and then allow her to brandish a riding crop and a snarl, and I think you have a sport that one might just go to Milton Keynes for.

Why rock chicks are no longer under the thumb of any guy



GLEND
COOPER
CHARTS THE
CHANGES

IN HIS *Satire*, Juvenal said, "There is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman." Today most men would add, "There is nothing more intolerable than a wealthy woman who is a successful rock star."

A new survey reveals that the five most popular albums of the 1990s are all by women. Whitney Houston leads the list with *Bodyguard*, which has sold 30 million copies, followed by Celine Dion, Mariah Carey, Alanis Morissette and the Spice Girls.

Michael Jackson also limps in at joint Number Five but then no one can really remember what his gender is. So where are the real men? Where is Oasis in this list? Or George Michael? Or Eric Clapton? Or any other of the giants of male rock? Squashed beneath a Spice Girl's trainer.

The boys must be hopping mad. Because the thing about rock is that it's a man's thing. You strut around with a phallic guitar, waiting for groupies to fall to their knees, and yell about chicks and sex and drugs. It's as George Harrison this week described the early days of the Beatles: "a lot of teenagers getting drunk playing rock 'n' roll... That's how it was. It was just a wild thing," he said. "But by 2am on Saturday it was just hell."

Not that they outdid the Rolling Stones. When Mick and Keith weren't being crushed like butterflies on a wheel or over-indulging in every way possible, they were busy penning songs about squirming bitches "under my thumb". The message was simple: rock is loud, it's macho, it's male.

A woman's place in the music industry was to be the adoring rock chick ready and waiting at the side of the stage. Or if she did want to sing then she could be a teenage songbird wailing about lost love. Think back to the Sixties again and the Crystals. Their first big hit in 1962 was just as it should be: *He's a Rebel* had the lyrics: "See the way he walks down the street... He's my guy/When he holds my hand I'm so proud". It would reassure any male su-



Facing off: Alanis Morissette and Mick Jagger

Photomontage photographs: LFI (left) and AP

premacist to hear women gushing about how special their man was. Or there was another hit the Crystals had the same year – *He Hit Me And It Felt Like A Kiss*. "He hit me and I knew he loved me. If he didn't care for me/I could never have made him mad. But he hit me and I was glad."

Of course there were women who didn't fit in – Janis Joplin or Tina Turner. Carly Simon may have got her revenge on Warren Beatty with *You're So Vain*. But then women singers always had burdens to carry – Tina had been beaten up and controlled by Ike, and

of rock himself Eric Clapton in trouble recently for his latest tune *Sick and Tired* which opines, "Get me a shotgun baby... I may have to blow your brains out, baby... Then you won't have to bother me no more."

The boys had it all their own way for too long; but then they went one of two directions. Either they still insisted on drinking too much, having scantily clad chicks in their videos and indulging in groin threatening antics on stage, causing Donna Gaines in her 1991 book *Tenacious Wasteland* to remark, "Metal is romanticised whining."

enough. This – from a man who used to shove shuttlecocks down his shorts – confirmed everything that women felt about the music industry: boys strutting around thinking they were important.

So while the men were feeling sorry for themselves the women started to break through, in the footsteps of such feisty predecessors as Joan Baez and Joni Mitchell. The Eighties women were led by Madonna, of course, who reinvented herself so many times that her male critics were always one step behind when trying to categorise her.

Very scared. They didn't like Alanis Morissette warning them: "When I scratch my nails down someone else's back/I hope you feel it". They didn't like that, but what they really hated was Jagged Little Pill selling 23 million copies.

Gone are the days when it was assumed that women would only listen to boy bands; now they pull on their stacked trainers and dance around to the Spice Girls. And this week women occupy both the number one and number two slots in the singles charts.

The much-mocked Girl Power is on the increase. The women on the lists do not conform to some feminist ideal nor are they writing protest songs. But they're knocking the boys' macho efforts into the ground. And women – and men – are buying female artists in their millions. The boys have been left behind.

Everyone laughed indulgently last year at the Brit Awards when Spice Girl Mel C reacted to Liam Gallagher's revelation that he stayed away from the Brits because he was afraid he would "chin" the Spice Girls if he met them there. "Liam," she jeered. "Come and have a go if you think you're hard enough!" We may have laughed at Sparty then. Few would give much for Liam's chances now.

A woman's place in the music industry was to be the adoring rock chick ready and waiting by the stage

Janis died of a drugs overdose, and now Carly has revealed she's fighting breast cancer. They may have been raunchy and they may have seemed strong, but underneath it all they were a mass of pain. See, girls that's what happens if you try to go it alone.

Rock has always been misogynistic and violent with it. And it's not limited to the decades before feminism kicked in. "I've always enjoyed writing songs about dead women," said the post-punk singer Nick Cave. Think about rappers talking endlessly about "bitches" and "hos". Or Prodigy and their tasteless *Smack My Bitch Up*. (Surprising how many women didn't get the supposed irony). And that grand-daddy

The other direction was for male singers to start taking themselves seriously. Prince had been quite happy squealing away about satisfying his woman and boasting about "twenty-two positions in a one night stand". (Twenty-two? Did anyone else work them all out? Answers on a postcard please). But then he rediscovered himself as an *artist* and started posing around with "slave" written on his face and only answering to the name of the Artist Formerly Known as Prince.

Representing himself with a symbol he was promptly dubbed "Squiggle" by the less reverent music press. George Michael, too, complained he wasn't being taken seriously

As well as the successful pop queens, there was a whole raft of rock girls who were repeatedly sneered at for being "musos" (that was if there was any form of thoughtfulness in your lyrics) or nothing more than "vagina rock" (if there was any suspicion of aggression). Whether you were Tori Amos or Liz Phair, Shirley Manson or PJ Harvey the reaction you got from men was that you had to be weird.

But the men were scared.

Reading the runes of the London referendum



TREVOR
PHILLIPS

WHAT A MAYOR SHOULD KNOW

LET'S NOT be too hard on the voters. Instead of exhorting them for being apathetic and ill-educated, perhaps we should try to hear the message they are sending us.

Elections and referendums are not just a choice offered from on high, they are a chance for the people to answer back. The low turnouts around the country in Thursday's local elections are being treated as though they reveal some great new mystery. They don't. It is only a year since nearly seven out of ten turned out to vote for a new government. Many people clearly believed that they had already done the job and saw no need to do it again. But there

is a deeper, rather dangerous argument being made: did the voters really know what they are doing?

On election night much attention was drawn to the high level of spoilt votes in the referendum for a Greater London Authority. I have already heard the discussions on the need for political education on the radio. Forget it: most of those voted and many of those who stayed away knew very well what they were doing, and they clearly pinpointed two rather telling weaknesses in Britain's local government. First it is not local. Second, it is seldom given the chance to govern.

The Thatcher reforms of local government left council spending rigidly controlled by central government. The standards for service delivery are being set as toughly by this new government as did the last administration. Benighted local councillors are increasingly meeting to confirm decisions already set out by ministers, with resources dictated by the Treasury. That hardly sounds like local control.

Councils can barely claim the flexibility to govern the biscuit allocation at committee meetings. When the local government of the capital city cannot even raise the cash to fix its roads and railways without the

permission of the men in the Treasury, you wonder what the point of it is.

This was, of course, one of the reasons to back a new form of government for London; and Londoners knew what was right. I don't propose to rehearse the arguments yet again, merely to point out some facts to those who claim that the better than three-to-one vote in favour was not much of a mandate.

Such a majority is the kind of plurality that most dictators dream of having. More than a million people voted "Yes"; and the London turnout was 8 or 9 per cent higher than elsewhere in the country. To put it another way, the effect of the Mayoral referendum was to bring out four voters in London for every three elsewhere. If that happened in a General Election we would be marvelling at a turnout in the capital of some 90 per cent.

And isn't it curious that though the London result produced a similar level of backing to that for the Welsh Assembly, vote had gone. I may have been on TV, but I don't flatter myself that I am anywhere as recognisable as, say, Jeffrey Archer or Ken Livingstone. The only explanation I can offer is that the shoppers, plumbers and taxi-drivers had a firm enough grip on the campaign to recognise one of its more obscure figures.

There is another lesson to be learnt, which I think will become clearer as the votes are analysed more thoroughly. In the London referendum the level of the "Yes" vote varied from a low of

57 per cent in Bromley (the borough which started the whole controversy over London government back in the early eighties by torpedoing the GLC's fares policy in the courts) up to 83.8 per cent in Haringey.

It would be easy to explain this away as a contrast between Tory and Labour strongholds, but that would not explain the low "Yes" vote in leftish Haringey, and the relatively high level of support – 74 per cent – in the Tory flagship Wandsworth. Nor is the division simply inner and outer London, as the figures vary widely in both cases.

A far more reliable indicator of enthusiasm is evident if you list the top six "Yes" votes – Lambeth, Haringey, Camden, Hackney, Islington and Newham. These are all boroughs with large concentrations of poor ethnic minority voters. The conclusion I draw is that people who for decades have seen local government fail to reflect the diversity of their communities are ready to invest hope in this new idea.

As the parties now start to go about the serious business of selecting their candidates for the assembly and the Mayorality, they would be foolish to ignore the fact that one-in-three voters will come from minority communities. Labour especial-

ly may find that if it wins nearly half its votes are cast by non-white hands.

If the new authority is not to fail it must be genuinely new. It will probably be two years before we know the personalities who will form the new leadership of London. Luckily for me, as an interviewer, I will have the chance to hold the politicians' feet to the fire for the next year or so, in order to ensure that the proposals are not neutered as they go through parliament. This will be great sport, but there are serious questions still to be tackled about the legislation.

It has to deliver decisive, powerful city government, untrammelled by old allegiances and machine politics. The new mayor and assembly should be the sort of outfit that lets everyone in the capital feel they have a place at the governing table. This referendum was not a job creation scheme for a bunch of middle-aged blokes whose principal qualification is that they've done something like this before. If they truly believe in London, they will step aside and allow the emergence of a new breed who feel and look like London. If not they will have to be pushed aside. And that, my friends, could be the most vicious, and therefore, entertaining, battle of all.

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It's no joke being a cartoonist

Martin Plimmer on a special festival devoted to the art world's mavericks

IN AT LEAST one respect, the cartoonist is God. He can make people's noses as big as he fancies. In every other way he is not so elevated.

There can be few people with lower status than him – it is nearly always a him. Unless the cartoonist is fortunate enough to be one of a tiny élite contracted to work for a national newspaper, he exists on the bottom rung of the media earnings ladder.

Newspapers don't devote so much space to cartoons any more and are less interested in the quality of the draughtsmanship than the gag. The cartoonist sits at home all day staring at the wall, alternately barking with laughter and howling with despair, working up topical jokes, which he faxes in batches to newspapers in the hope that, should a hole happen to arise in an editorial layout, one of his cartoons will be picked from a huge pile of similar, unsolicited submissions.

Then his masterpiece will be shrunk to fit a tiny space, and he will receive from £40 to slightly over £100. The highest rates are paid by *Private Eye* and *Punch*, for whom the cartoon is much more than a filler. *Punch* uses 20 to 30 cartoons a week which threaten to sink cartoon editor Steve Way's desk. He gets 700 a week, but the number keeps on growing. "It's one of those things a lot of people think they can do and while it's relatively easy to make some money, it's very difficult to make a career of it. You've got to sell four or five to make a reasonable weekly wage and to achieve that you've got

to do 30 or 40 drawings. You've got to be a very good cartoonist to earn more than £6,000 a year. It's that hard."

We don't value our cartoonists – we don't even have a cartoon museum. But it also has a lot to do with the cartoonist's habit of looking sideways at people and laughing quietly to himself. He is the dysfunctional brother of the stand-up comedian (whose ability to repeat his jokes he envies).

This cloak of anonymity will be cast aside tomorrow at Cartoon '98, a celebration of cartoonists' art at Chelsea Town Hall, London. Those being outed include Michael Heath, Caroline Holden, Chris Riddell, Geoff Thompson, Giles Pilbrow and Colin Wheeler.



The joker: fantasy and the reality
Cartoons: B Kilban

"It's an attempt to raise the status of cartoons," says Duncan McCoshan whose home-made magazine, *The Journal of Silly*, is organising the day together with the Cartoon Arts Trust. There will be stalls selling original drawings, displays by caricaturists and children's workshops. The illustration on the poster for the event is of a man shooting his shadow with a gun. That won't put anyone off. As every cartoonist knows, angst is funny.



Scenes from a torture chamber: Carl's hands are cut off (left) because of his love for a man; Tinker forcibly injects a hysterical Grace, while Robin looks on (below). Photograph: Robbie Jack

Real live horror show

Sarah Kane's new play, 'Cleansed', will shock theatregoers, but that doesn't mean it shouldn't be shown. By David Benedict

FOR BETTER or worse, the spell of most plays drifts off the moment you leave the theatre. Not Sarah Kane's *Cleansed*. Hard as you try, its compelling, horror-soaked atmosphere refuses to be shaken off. It clings to you like a shroud.

This is hardly surprising in a play which painstakingly charts the descent into the brutality of a world which seeks to deny the power of positive emotion. Its catalogue of cruelties has already been accused of being irresponsibly shocking but the real shock is how powerfully the vivid images resound in your imagination for ages afterwards.

The hullabaloo that greeted Kane's Royal Court debut, *Blasted*, in 1995, catapulted her from nowhere to notoriety in a single night. Broadsheet newspapers, and tabloids who didn't even have a theatre critic, cleared pages to denounce the "atrocities" on display. Theatre hadn't seen such scandal since Mary Whitehouse tried to sue the National for the simulated anal rape in *The Romans in Britain* 15 years earlier, a scene which resembled *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* in comparison.

Kane's return to the Court revisits extreme violence. Grace (Susan Sylvester) visits a nameless institution to reclaim the clothes of her beloved brother Graham, who died while being held there as a heroin addict. Although we have already seen his death in the opening scene – he's given a fatal overdose via an injection in his eye – there is an air of malevolent mystery about what is happening.

But Kane refuses to spoon-feed her audience with anything as comforting as a straightforward detective narrative. Instead she presents us with 20 measured scenes set within this fascist institution designed to rid society of its "undesirables", in which torture and punishment are mercilessly and methodically meted out to a desperate

group of people struggling to save themselves through love.

At one particularly tender moment, Grace tries to teach Robin, an educationally sub-normal boy, to read and write. Trying to draw her name so that the image corresponds to the sound of the word, he asks her for a pink crayon. Grace insists, "It's not about colour, colour doesn't come into it." To a degree, that sums up Kane's world view. For her, nearly everything is black and white, with few shades of grey. Learning that she was a fervent, born-again, Christian until the age of 17 comes as no surprise when faced with the complete conviction of her writing: there is no room for doubt.

The writing has an almost unparalleled distilled intensity which is often unbearable to watch. Whether flinching or

much contemporary dialogue-driven young writing look simply unambitious.

She is also an extremely strict writer. As in the work of Edward Bond (a major influence), her stage directions demand the apparently impossible, from the severing of limbs to burning a library of books to shattering a wall with blood and gunfire. As her own production of her translation of *Phaedra's Love* proved (an event which forced many of her critics to recant), she is no mean director herself.

But here, as in *Blasted*, she has the immense good fortune to have a director with a similarly exacting dramatic mind. James Macdonald's production has a quite terrifying sense of purpose. It is impossible to say where Jeremy Herbert's design stops and Macdonald's direction takes

tancing degree of stylisation. The pain would be unwatchable. Yet the night I saw it, nobody left.

The precision of the staging may be beautiful but even that can not disguise clear weaknesses in the writing. With his shaved head looking lost and vulnerable nodding over his gangly body, Daniel Evans is a vision of innocence as Robin. The scene where he discovers an abacus and carefully counts out his days, building to his desperately sad suicide, is an extraordinarily affecting portrayal of a boy lost in hope, but several of the other roles are fatally underwritten. Stuart McQuarrie tries to lend depth to the torturer but the role leaves him straitjacketed.

The spare dialogue strives to pare the emotions to the bone but Kane's rigour overtakes her. The moments of pure goodness – the warmth of sunlight or the sudden appearance of upon row upon row of daffodils – are there to counterbalance the horrors of a society which kills love, but they don't resonate as strongly she will them to. There are flashes of humour (which the audience feasts upon like manna in the wilderness) but they are few and far between, and too often she tips the balance too far, which leaves her straining to achieve further effect.

Cleansed is no means an unmitigated success, but the duty of all new-writing theatres is to honour the vision of its playwrights. To reach maturity, as Kane surely will, it is essential their work be staged. An unperformed text remains unfinished. This fiercely powerful realisation of a profoundly dystopic vision is one of the most disturbing productions you will ever see. To some it will be repellent. Others will recognise it as absolute proof of the power of live theatre.

'Cleansed' is at the Royal Court Theatre downstairs, London WC2 (0171 565 5000).



SHOCK! OUTRAGE! ENCORE!

"Shock and horror tactics in the theatre have an honourable tradition from the Greeks and Jacobean through to James Bond. Kane may want to be a *Bad Girl*, but she also shows enormous promise."

Michael Coveney,
Daily Mail

a cynical attempt to retain its reputation for controversial cutting-edge theatre. In fact, the play is a deadly, entirely predictable bore."

Charles Spencer,
Daily Telegraph

"Sarah Kane clearly believes that she is a serious writer with important things to say. What saddens me is that the Royal Court encourages her in this delusion, in what looks like

"She is not the gloating opportunist that some reviewers of *Blasted* thought; she has, I feel, no less integrity than Pinter or Bond; but, God knows, I would hate to live in her head."

Benedict Nightingale,
The Times

Those expecting a splatter-fest will be disappointed. Everything is done through suggestion, which is far more harrowing

shuddering, your reactions to the violence are extremely physical. Carl, whose crime was to love Rod, another man, is systematically robbed of all means of human expression over successive scenes. Beaten up by unseen hands, he is then raped by an (invisible) metal pole, his tongue is cut out, his hands and then feet are cut away in sight of his lover. It may seem excessive but Kane is dealing with authoritarian violence, hardly the stuff of discretion and politeness.

In fact, her handling of image and metaphor sets her apart from almost every other playwright of her generation. Like her peers, all she is doing is creating a coherent world on her own terms, but the dramatic conjuring up of her controlled rage of what she sees makes so

over, but without both the play would collapse. The text demands an almost bald production and they pay it the highest compliment by creating highly stylised, carefully plotted, pristine visual images. Those expecting a splatter-fest will be disappointed. Everything is done through suggestion, which, of course, is far more harrowing.

As a section of perimeter fence or a hospital bed are flown slowly down from above, red ribbons are used to indicate blood. At one point, Grace hangs suspended while apparently lying on a bed: the image of martyrdom is not accidental. Macdonald and Herbert take you by the hand, allowing you to become a prisoner of Kane's fierce but fiercely controlled imagination. Without this dis-

ROBERT HANKS' WEEK IN RADIO

THERE are more things in heaven and earth, correct me if I'm wrong, than are dreamt of in your philosophy. In an edition of the science programme *Frontiers*, entitled "Some of Our Universe Is Missing" (Radio 4, Wednesday), the tag turned out to have a gratifyingly literal application.

Peter Evans talked to a number of scientists about "dark matter", the really heavy, black stuff which, according to the best calculations, is floating around, invisibly, somewhere in the universe.

The argument goes like this: it seems clear that there must be an awful lot of gravity holding the whirling cosmos together. And since gravity goes along with mass, we can have a pretty good stab at the mass of the universe. But when we compare that calculation with the amount of stuff we can see, it seems that we can only account for about 10 per cent of that mass. So there must be vast quantities of invisible stuff to make up the difference.

This opening section was presented with admirable clarity; after that, though, despite his best efforts and those of the

scientists interviewed, clarity broke down somewhat. This is not an area in which clarity is entirely possible.

The fascinating part of the programme came at the end, where scientists suggested alternatives to dark matter: perhaps we're wrong to assume that space is a simple, empty thing, and the effects we attribute to dark matter are just space doing what it does. Or perhaps we need to scrap all our physics and begin again from first principles.

Most scientists, understandably, were unhappy with this idea, but one or two were tickled. That line about more things on heaven and earth is a cliché beloved of the *X-Files* fan, but really, it is science's own motto – an acknowledgment that it doesn't know all the answers and shouldn't claim to.

In the same week, however, we have had a depressing example of the thoroughly unscientific, in the shape of *Sleuths* (Radio 4, Tuesday). This series ended with a look at Keith Wright, a detective with the Metropolitan Police who moonlights as a clairvoyant. Wright, himself, had no time for

scientific justifications, he just "knew" that his psychic powers worked, and backed his knowledge up with some vague anecdotal evidence.

More worrying, though, was the thoroughly uncritical tone

of the programme, taking all his claims at face value and giving him airtime to counter every attack. What is the point of broadcasting science programmes when you undermine them with superstitious tosh?

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YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY.

هكذا من الأصل

Miracle? What miracle?

Headlines about cancer 'cures' are no comfort for people who are fighting the disease, writes Ann Treneman

THERE are three things you can count on when it comes to news about cancer. The first is that the word "hope" will be in the headline and the second is that the word "breakthrough" will be in the first sentence. The third is that neither are probably true on the day in question.

So it has been with this week's "Hopes for Cancer Cure" headlines. The story that came out of Boston via the *New York Times* said that scientists wanted to start human trials with two "breakthrough" drugs that have been shown to eradicate all tumours in mice. The reports said trials may start "soon" but that seems to mean within a year. The cure itself is at least two years away.

One in three of us will get a form of the disease, so anything that hints of cure is news. But the drug companies have an interest here too. The mere suggestion that the Boston scientists wanted to start human trials saw the company which plans to market the drug increase its share value by \$71 to \$83 on the day of the report.

But what of the cancer sufferers? How do they react to the revelations of serial breakthroughs? Others see salvation and it's only human to think that somewhere between the lines lies the very cure for their cancer. The day after a cancer makes the news, the phones never stop ringing at Britain's 600 cancer charities. But perhaps a more common reaction is anger. As breast cancer survivor Gillian Hudson says: "It's all so simplified. Nothing in life is that simple."

Here is how she and two others with cancer reacted to the latest breakthrough news.



Fighting on: Giles Trentham has been told he has two months to live after cancer spread to his liver. Photograph: John Lawrence

GILLIAN HUDSON

Aged 37, of Carshalton in Surrey, she was diagnosed last May with breast cancer. She had a partial mastectomy and did not have to have any radiotherapy or chemotherapy. She attends a support group at the Royal Marsden hospital.

"At first when you see the headline and it's like a new cancer drug, you feel quite uplifted and then you read it and find out that it has only been tested on mice. Then there was a quote later on in the article which said 'This is not going to help anybody who has cancer now'. It makes you quite angry, actually."

"The death of Linda McCartney was quite a horrific time for anybody with breast cancer. I've spoken to the people in my support group, and we all found it

very upsetting. The papers had said that she had beaten breast cancer but she obviously hadn't.

"Nobody really beats breast cancer, you live with breast cancer and it's a matter of how long you live with it."

"People had thought that if Linda McCartney could beat it, they could too. And then you read that she's died. Very distressing."

"I wish it were that they would discover a drug that would kill all cancers, but it doesn't work like that. They should report more realistically. The actual articles are balanced but a lot of people just take on board the headline."

"It's like my niece called me up and she said: 'Oh isn't it wonderful about that new drug. That means you'll be all right now.' I didn't have the heart to tell her: 'No it doesn't actually'."

GILES TRENTHAM

The 52-year-old businessman, from Oxfordshire, was diagnosed with colon cancer last spring and underwent surgery, chemotherapy and a course at the Bristol Cancer Help Centre. The cancer has now spread to his liver and he has been told he has two months to live.

"I pursue all of the stories. I've been told that they can't do much for me in the conventional sense, so I am much more open to looking at other things. I went out to Italy for a week about three weeks ago to pursue this Professor Luigi di Bella who claims to have cured tens of thousands of patients. There have been lots of articles on him."

"We've probably looked quite seriously at 10 alternative treatments. We looked at a Russian therapy

to do with using a protein in the umbilical cord but I was told it was \$200,000 just to walk in the door."

"I heard about the news this week when a friend faxed me the article from the *New York Times*. I woke up and there was a seven page fax. She's a very old friend and she said: 'Giles, don't give up hope. Stay alive for a year because you never know, this just might work!' Another friend is trying to see if there is any chance that I can get on the clinical trials."

"The way I handle these stories is to try and go into action on it fast and then sort of leave it. I have to live very much in the present. I think my chances of getting well are much more than my chances of having some miracle cure in two years, so it doesn't really bother me, but it does interest me hugely."

JOHN DIAMOND

The media commentator and *Times* columnist has written extensively about what it is like to have throat cancer. His book "C - Because Cancers Get Cancer Too" is out next month.

"I really did think that the press knew better by now than to run 'miracle cure for cancer' stories. How did I feel? My heart skipped a beat, I stopped what I was doing and sat down on the stairs and worked my way through the papers. What I wanted to read was that all my doctors had to do was to keep me going long enough to be around when the miracle is proven - even though I knew there is no possibility of this. Not because my doctors can't keep me going but because however high the share price rises to, no drug can do what

the press claim for this drug."

"I admit that this is a difficult one for the press to deal with. 'New drug based on old theory may at some time in the future treat certain sorts of cancer' isn't the snappiest headline in the world."

"One of the real problems is not simply that people's hopes are raised unrealistically but that the NHS has to waste precious resources dealing with those hopes. The day after GP's surgeries around the land are filled with patients pleading for the new 'treatment'. In fact one GP I spoke to last time such a story broke said that what often happens is that the cancer patient's spouse or parent turns up for treatment for some minor illness - 'It's this splinter doctor, I think it's going septic' - and after the doctor has dealt with that pleads for the new treatment."

Cancer: the lab report

ACCORDING to the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America, it takes 15 years to bring an experimental drug to human patients. Only one in 1,000 compounds tested makes it into safety trials on humans; of those, only one in 20 is approved. Some recently mentioned "cures" are:

Glutathione S-transferase (GtSp)
What it does: It's an enzyme that, in mice, seems to help cells to detoxify themselves.
Who gets the money: The Imperial Cancer Research Fund and Cancer Research Campaign, which are funding the research.
Next step: To understand what GtSp does, and whether it has a direct human analogue.
Supporters say: "A single gene could be profoundly important in protecting us against cancer" - Prof Roland Wolf, University of Dundee.
Other views: "My concern is that the importance of the work and what we are trying to say is taken out of context" - Professor Wolf again (after widespread press coverage).

Endostatin and angiostatin.
What they do: Apparently, these proteins are secreted by tumours to stop other tumours growing.

Who gets the money: Entremed, based in Rockville, Maryland.
Next step: tests on humans.

Supporters say: "The most exciting cancer research in my lifetime" - James Watson, co-discoverer of the structure of DNA.

Other views: "The history of cancer research is littered with promised treatments that raised hopes, only for them to be dashed when the treatments were put to the test in humans" - James Watson (again), in a letter to the *New York Times*.

MDA, a drug cocktail of the growth hormone somatostatin, and retinoid, a vitamin A drug. What it does: Supposedly encourages healthy cells to multiply.

Who gets the money: Dr di Bella, 86, charges £200 a day for his treatment.

Next step: "Blind" tests, due to end in June.
Supporters say: "The drugs I use are non-toxic... the patient does not suffer the side-effects of sickness, tiredness and loss of hair" - Dr di Bella.

Other views: "Conventional medicine cures four out of 10 people of cancer. Who can blame the other six for looking for an alternative solution?" - Professor Gordon McVie, Cancer Research Campaign.

Frogspawn
What it does: nobody's sure.

Who gets the money: Dundee University.

Next step: Carry out research for five years.
Supporters say: "By learning about problem cells we hope we may be able to develop treatments that prevent cells becoming malignant" - Dr Julian Blow, team head.

Others say: it's far, far too soon to say.

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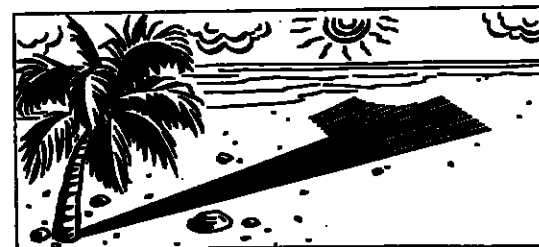
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Sir Alan Glyn

IT IS a great mistake to haunt the corridors of the Commons and of the Palace of Westminster too long. I fear that most current members of the House will remember Alan Glyn as a creaky, occasionally cantankerous old buffer. This is a pity.

The Alan Glyn whom I first knew as MP for Clapham in the early 1960s, and later in his first decade as MP for Windsor, was shrewd, interesting, wittily sardonic, well-informed with first-hand information and a delightful companion on all-party parliamentary visits. He was an observer of the spread of Communism across the international scene and had personal experience of many of the trouble spots of the post-war world. That he was able to travel at personal expense, beholden to no one, made his impressions and insights the more valuable.

Glyn was then a potentially considerable member of the House of Commons as a London MP; later to be personally annoyed by the austere and heavy-weight Sir Charles Mott-Radcliffe as his successor in the safe Tory Windsor constituency. Mott-Radcliffe - who was the captain of the House of Commons cricket team - told me in 1969 that Alan Glyn was "an excellent all-rounder" in both crick- eting and non-cricketing terms.

Alan Glyn was born in London, the son of a barrister, John Paul Glyn, who had been an officer in the Royal Horse Guards - later one of his son's many credentials as representative of Combermere Barracks and all that goes with the Household Cavalry and Windsor. Glyn's association with the Blues was to be lifelong, even after he retired as an honorary major in 1967. His mother, Margaret Johnston, came from a distinguished Edinburgh legal family.

After Westminster he read Natural Sciences at Caius College, Cambridge. He was taught by Joseph Needham, later to be a Companion of Honour and Master of the college, but famous as the historian of Chinese science. Glyn told me that, though his political views were

at the other end of any spectrum from those of Joe Needham, it was Needham who had first interested him in the Far East.

At the outbreak of war Glyn enlisted as a trooper in his father's old regiment and was commissioned in 1940. He volunteered for service in the Far East, having graduated at Staff College, and went to India and Burma in 1942; he was demobilised as a Brigade Major in 1946.

Resuming his medical studies he qualified in 1948 and went into general practice. As a doctor he had a favourable reputation and was certainly held in the highest esteem by colleagues of all parties in the House of Commons. In the 1960s and 1970s anyone who became ill in the Palace of Westminster was treated by Dr Barnett Stross, Dr Maurice Miller, Dr David Owen, Dr David Kerr or any other doctor MP who could be found. Alan Glyn excelled in such fraught situations; he was good at diagnosis, nothing too much trouble.

Having also qualified in law, Glyn was chosen for Clapham, partly by virtue of the impression which he had made as a co-opted member of the old London County Council education committee. He was elected by a majority of 22,266 to the 20,390 of the sitting Labour member, Charles Gibson, in 1959, losing his seat by 556 votes to Mrs Margaret McKay in 1964.

In his maiden speech on 10 February 1960 he described how he had been in Hungary at a crucial moment in world history. I am influenced, I must confess, in my approach to foreign affairs by the events of 1956. At that time, I was fortunate - or unfortunate - enough to be in Hungary during the revolution. I witnessed the Russian armies invading that country, in contravention to a treaty and an agreement which had been made only three days previously by which the Russians guaranteed that they would leave Hungary and never invade it again.

As I journeyed from Hungary to Warsaw, I saw the Russian armies advancing from Russia. It occurred to me then, and it has occurred to me ever since, that there was nothing in Europe at that time in the way of conventional forces which could possibly have stopped those armies proceeding westwards through Aus-



Well-informed: Glyn in a US personnel carrier on patrol in Vietnam

tria and right through Europe. There was only one factor which could stop them and that was the fear of the atomic deterrent. I am quite convinced that that was the factor which deterred them.

Glyn was a champion of the possession of nuclear weapons, but not an unthinking one. When he lost his seat in 1964, he made excellent use of his absence from the Commons by going, as a war correspondent, to Vietnam. He wrote *Witness to Viet Nam: the containment of Communism in South-East Asia*, published in 1968, in which he addressed with perception key questions of the day. How did the war start? Who were the Vietnamese? How was it that the struggle between such unequally armed combatants, the United States on one hand, and the ill-armed guerrillas on the other, was lasting so long? He was among the first to predict the terrible consequences for Laos and Cambodia.

On his return he told George Scott of the BBC Home Service *Ten O'Clock Programme*.

It can't be solved by war alone, this is quite clear. It will have to be solved by... beating the Vietnamese militarily, but at the same time you have got to produce three essential things for the people of Vietnam. First of all, you have got to give them security from attack by the Vietnamese; secondly, you have got to be able to produce a better standard of living than that which is offered by the Communists; and lastly you have got to give them the feeling that they can go about their business, tend their fields, in liberty and freedom, and live a normal family life not any different from any other community in the world.

When Glyn returned to the Commons his first speech was on 9 December 1970 when he gave us first-hand experience not only of Vietnam but of China, Algeria, Fidel Castro's Cuba, Cyprus, the West Bank and many other areas to which he had been.

Crucial to Glyn was the support of his feisty and charming wife of whom he used repeatedly to say, "When I went away there were dangerous, Russia would tell me, 'If you really must, get killed. But for pity's sake, whatever you do, do not get yourself

taken prisoner and cause complications for all of us."

In the early days of his parliamentary return it was a sadness to him that his experience could not have been put to use on the front bench of either the Foreign Office or the Ministry of Defence. However, whatever his unfulfilled ambitions, Glyn was an assiduous Member - "a most conscientious attendee," in the words of Michael Jopling, "even when he was a far-from-well man" - who would go to enormous trouble to make sure that he voted to support his party in government whenever they needed him. Service was his yardstick.

Tam Dalyell

Alan Glyn, journalist, physician, lawyer and politician: born London 26 September 1918; called to the Bar, Middle Temple 1955; MP (Conservative) for Clapham 1959-64, for Windsor 1970-74, for Windsor and Maidenhead 1974-92; Kt 1990; married 1962 Lady Rosalind Windsor (two daughters); died London 5 May 1998.

Professor Myres McDougal

INTERNATIONAL law is not about neutral rules which states apply or ignore as power politics dictate. It is a particular form of authoritative decision-making, operating where power and authority coincide, and unashamedly directed towards the achievement of very precisely defined goals which necessarily are not value-free. This, in essence, is the policy science approach to international law, formulated by Myres McDougal in the 1950s and 1960s with the political scientist Harold Lasswell and elaborated and applied over the years with a variety of associates.

The ideas underlying the policy science, or "Yale Law School", approach to international law were of themselves challenging and controversial. They were made the more so by the powerful and combative style with which McDougal advanced them, whether orally or in writing. In the 1960s and 1970s it had only to be suggested that he would intervene at an international law meeting - whether at the Royal Institute of International Affairs in London, or the American Society of International Law in Washington - for the hall to be filled to overflowing by those who relished the battle that was bound to follow, as McDougal turned his guns on the opposition.

The opposition ranged from the "realpolitik" critics of international law (such as Hans Morgenthau and George Kennan), to those who insisted upon the traditional virtue of rules and neutrality (such as Sir Gerald Fitzmaurice), and to those who accepted the relevance of policy but rejected the need for a rigorous methodology for its application (such as Wolfgang Friedmann).

McDougal's pugnacious style on matters legal was matched by Southern courtesy on matters personal. He was adored by his students and respected and liked even by those who profoundly disagreed with him. Knocking on the door of his office at Yale Law School one would hear the shouted command "Come!" (never "Come in"). When one had entered the room, an imposing figure wearing a green eye visor could eventually be discerned among the thousands of books which filled all available space. No student ever felt rushed. Indeed, the lucky ones might be invited to the Graduate Club to continue the discussion over dinner.

He was an inspired teacher whose deeply original ideas have irrevocably altered the way we think about international law. No international lawyer of the last 50 years has been so much written about by others. McDougal was also an intensely loyal man - those of whom he approved continued to receive his vigorous support over the years.

McDougal's output was prodigious. He constantly battled against failing eyesight, but, with his eye visor, gave magnifying glass and carefully selected younger associates, kept the problem at bay. He began his legal writing in the field of property law, before turning to international law, and specifically

to jurisprudence, the law of the seas, treaty law, space law, human rights, legal education and the use of force. *Law and Minimum World Public Order* (written with Florentino Feliciano, 1961) and *Theories About International Law: prologue to a configurative jurisprudence* (written with Lasswell and Michael Reisman, in the *Virginia Journal of International Law*, 1968) are two outstanding, and typical, examples.

In the 1980s he collaborated increasingly with Michael Reisman, who had succeeded him as Professor of International Law at Yale. Beyond the immediate circle of those with whom he wrote, there are today many international lawyers around the world whose approach to their discipline is broadly sympathetic to McDougal's legal philosophy. He had an active practice in international law, often working together with Reisman. He appeared before the International Court of Justice on behalf of the United States in litigation brought by Nicaragua. But he was perhaps viewed as too much wedded to his own approach ever to be appointed to the International Law Commission or the international judiciary.

His influence was above all as a teacher and he knew that his former students, who never lost touch with him (and, in-

ing of his analysis and ideas. For McDougal, the use of unfamiliar language, with its references to "decision makers" and "participants" and "community expectations", was precisely to express ideas about the international legal process that were indeed different from the ideas carried by the more traditional vocabulary.

It was necessary to find a vocabulary to express his perception of international law as a dynamic process available to a variety of international actors to achieve specified social goals. The old vocabulary wouldn't do, because the terms themselves often represented the expression of ideas that McDougal believed misconceived. In truth, his vocabulary was comprehensible with a minimum of effort.

What undoubtedly did make his work less accessible, from the stylistic point of view, was the heavily methodological superstructure. People were keen to read his views on, for example, treaties or the high seas; they did not want to have to plough through pages on the process of authoritative decision, the various authority functions, strategies, etc. But McDougal believed that only adherence to the methodology would lead to the correct analysis.

Accessibility aside, the substance of his work generated enormous interest and considerable controversy. It was fiercely attacked by those who believed that the methodology on which it was based was so open textured that it would allow of any result at all, whereas "law" has to be determinate. His critics also contended that the policy science approach too often served to promote US interests, which were dignified as "community values" to which decision-making should be directed.

This perception was confirmed in their eyes by the robust support McDougal gave to the action of the US administration in such matters as the intervention in Grenada and support to the Contras in Nicaragua. But his objectives were far from traditionally conservative. Senator Eastland (Democrat, Mississippi) said in reference to McDougal's views on the UN Charter: "Mr McDougal was a schoolmate of mine. He is a very distinguished professor at Yale University, and I think a very misguided liberal." He campaigned for US ratification of human rights treaties; for the Ibo cause in Nigeria; for sanctions in Southern Rhodesia; for women's rights; for pluralism.

He thought of himself as an unreconstructed Southerner: an American patriot; and an Oxford man. A Rhodes scholar as a young man, nothing gave him keener pleasure than his honorary fellowship in 1982 of his old college, St John's.

Rosalyn Higgins

Myres Smith McDougal, international lawyer, legal philosopher and educationalist: born Burton, Mississippi 23 November 1906; Sterling Professor of International Law, Yale Law School 1958-75 (Emeritus); married 1933 Frances Lee (one son); died New Haven, Connecticut 7 May 1998.



McDougal: pugnacious

R. B. Beare

R. B. BEARE was a third generation in the family firm of violin dealers. The original firm of Beare, Goodwin - the first ever wholesaler of musical instruments in Britain - was established by his grandfather John Beare in Brewer Street, London, in 1865, selling musical instruments from Jew's-harps at six shillings per gross to symphonies at £36 each (extra tunes, five shillings). Violins could be had for 12 shillings a piece. They also published music and one of the first composers on their list was the young, and completely unknown, Edward Elgar.

The firm later became Beare & Son, specialising in instruments of the violin family and managed by John Beare's younger son, Walter. In 1892 John Beare opened a retail shop in Wardour



Beare: equable

Street, J. & A. Beare, for his elder son, Arthur, and as such it became one of the best-known international violin dealers.

Richard Barrington Beare, Walter's younger son, entered the business in 1931 and, after war service (four years in the

Royal Army Service Corps in North Africa), served as managing director until his retirement in 1978. Under his direction Beare & Son enlarged its sources of supply, not only acquiring stock from traditional centres such as Mirecourt in France and Mittenwald in Germany, but also initiating imports from makers in Czechoslovakia and Romania. He was particularly concerned to find affordable instruments for music students.

J. & A. Beare is now under the direction of his cousin Charles Beare, a leading authority on the valuation of stringed instruments world-wide.

"Dick" Beare was born in Surbiton in 1908, the younger son of Walter Beare and Constance Wodehouse - one of the Kimberley Wodehouses and a distant cousin of the novelist

P.G. Wodehouse. He was educated at Charterhouse where, in his last two years, he was a member of the school's football and cricket XI's. Going on to Jesus College, Cambridge, he won a football Blue in 1929 and a golf Blue in 1930 - in the same team as Henry Longhurst. It was said that he could easily have won a third for cricket, had he stayed up another year.

Over the years he played regularly with the Corinthian Casuals and won numerous golf trophies including the Ogilvie Shield, in 1928 and 1929, the Neale Cup (1929) and the Frigate (1930) at Thorpeness Golf Club, and the much-coveted Harry Vardon Cup at West Herts Golf Club in 1928. He was also Suffolk County Champion in 1946. (Had he followed his instincts he could have become

a successful professional golfer - he was a scratch player at 16.)

In 1947 he married the musical journalist, and future biographer of Arnold Dolmetsch, Margaret Campbell. They shared many interests including the theatre, concert-going and foreign travel.

Dick Beare was cheerful, equable in temperament and possessed great personal charm. He was physically fit and was still playing golf until well into his eighties and thought nothing of walking five or six miles a day "just to keep in trim".

Steve Aal

Richard Barrington Beare, violin dealer: born Surbiton, Surrey 20 July 1908; married 1947 Margaret Campbell (two sons, one daughter); died Wendover, Buckinghamshire 18 April 1998.

BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS

MARRIAGES
BURMAN/SAICH: Keith, younger son of Mrs D. Burman, of Cape Town, South Africa, and Nancy, eldest daughter of Mr and Mrs M.J. Saich, of Cusick, Surrey, today at the Barbican Centre, London.

Announcements for Gazette BIRTHS, MARRIAGES & DEATHS (Births, Adoptions, Marriages, Deaths, Memorial services, Wedding anniversaries, In Memoriam) should be sent in writing to the Gazette Editor, The Independent, 1 Canada Square, Canary Wharf, London E14 3DL, telephoned to 071-253 2022 (24-hour answering machine 071-253 2091) or faxed to 071-253 2090, and are charged at £6.50 a line (VAT extra). OTHER Gazette announcements (medical, funerals, forthcoming marriages, marriages) must be submitted in writing (or faxed) and are charged at £10 a line, VAT extra. They should be accompanied by a daytime telephone number.

The Independent's main switchboard number is 071-253 2000. The OBITUARIES e-mail address is obituaries@independent.co.uk

ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS
Today Princess Alexandra, Countess of Wessex, will marry the Duke of Gloucester, Prince Edward, at Westminster Abbey, London, 10.30pm. The Duke of Kent, Prince Edward, will marry the Duchess of Kent, Princess Alexandra, at the Combined Churches of the Combined Churches Association, at Hyde Park, London W1.

Changing of the Guard
Today the Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment mounts the Queen's Life Guard in White Hall, London. The Regiment is commanded by the Colonel, The Duke of Devonshire. The Regiment is composed of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, 15th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 23rd, 24th, 25th, 26th, 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 31st, 32nd, 33rd, 34th, 35th, 36th, 37th, 38th, 39th, 40th, 41st, 42nd, 43rd, 44th, 45th, 46th, 47th, 48th, 49th, 50th, 51st, 52nd, 53rd, 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th, 58th, 59th, 60th, 61st, 62nd, 63rd, 64th, 65th, 66th, 67th, 68th, 69th, 70th, 71st, 72nd, 73rd, 74th, 75th, 76th, 77th, 78th, 79th, 80th, 81st, 82nd, 83rd, 84th, 85th, 86th, 87th, 88th, 89th, 90th, 91st, 92nd, 93rd, 94th, 95th, 96th, 97th, 98th, 99th, 100th.

BIRTHdays

TODAY: Mr Richard Adams, author, 78; Mr Alan Bennett, actor and playwright, 64; Miss Candice Bergen, actress, 52; The Right Rev Cyril Bowles, assistant Bishop, diocese of Gloucester, 82; Miss Sheila Burrell, actress, 76; Dr Vincent Cable MP, 55; Mr John Cook, consultant surgeon, 58; Lord Cooke of Thomond, former President, New Zealand Court of Appeal, 72; Mr Terry Downes, boxer, 62; Mr Albert Finney, actor and director, 62; Mr Carlo Maria Giulini, conductor, 84; Mr Keith Haskell, ambassador to Brazil, 59; Sir Geoffrey Holland, Vice-Chancellor, Exeter University, 60; Miss Glenda Jackson MP, Minister for Transport in London, 62; Mr Billy Joel, singer, 49; Mr Matthew Kelly, broadcaster, 48; Mr Ruth Kelly MP, 30; General Sir Peter Leung, former Master-General of the Ordnance, 73; Lord Lloyd of Berwick, a Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 69; Mr Gavin Lyall, author, 66; Sir John McDermott, a Lord Justice of Appeal, Northern Ireland, 71; Miss Geraldine McEwan, actress, 66; Professor Alistair MacFarlane, former Principal and Vice-Chancellor, Heriot-Watt University, 67; Mr Brian McMaster, Director, Edinburgh Festival, 55; Dr Roy Massey, Master of the Choristers, Hereford Cathedral, 64; Mr William Oliver MP, 54; Sir David Plassow, Chairman, Medical Research Council, 66; Mr John Robertson, former deputy chairman, Barclays de Zoete Wedd, 64; Mr Patrick Ryecart, actor, 46; Mr Vernon Sankey, chief executive, Reckitt and Colman, 49; Mr Malcolm Savidge MP, 52; Miss Joan Sims, actress, 68; Admiral Sir Victor Smith, former Chairman, Australian Chiefs of Staff Committee, 85; Ms Claire Ward MP, 26; Mr Graham Ward, chairman, World Utilities Group, Price Waterhouse, 46; Sir Nicholas Wilson, High Court judge, 53. **TOMORROW:** Mr Milton Babitt, composer, 82; Mr Win Blischoff, chairman, Schroders, 57; Mrs Bar-

bara Taylor Bradford, author, 65; Mr William Cash MP, 58; Sir Brian Corby, former chairman, Poulton Corporation, 69; Maj-Gen Peter Davies, Director General, RSPCA, 60; Maj-Gen Edward Fursdon, defence consultant, 73; Sir Edward Gardner QC, 86; Sir Basil Kelly, a former Lord Justice of Appeal, Northern Ireland, 78; Miss June Knox-Mawer, radio presenter, 68; Lady Lucinda Lambton (Lady Worthington), writer, broadcaster and photographer, 55; Mr Richard Lavers, ambassador to Ecuador, 51; Sir John Laws, High Court judge, 53; Miss Margaret Lipman, actress, 52; Lord Milligan, a Senator of the College of Justice in Scotland, 64; Lt-Gen Sir Anthony Mullen, former Deputy Chief of Defence Staff, 62; Lord Mustill, a former Lord of Appeal in Ordinary, 67; Sir David Orr, Chancellor, Queen's University of Belfast, 76; Sir Angus Paton, civil engineer, 55; Mr Bruce Raymond, former jockey, 55; Mr Michael Shea, author, 60; Lord Smith, consulting surgeon, 84; Sir Denis Thatcher Bt, company director, 83.

Anniversaries

TODAY: Births: James Matthew Barrie, novelist and playwright, 1860. Deaths: Helena Petrovna Blavatsky, occultist, 1891. On this day: Lincoln Cathedral was consecrated, 1092. Today is the Feast Day of St Beatus of Limerick, St Beatus of Vendome, St Gervastius of Cervia and St Paternus, 1979. On this day: Winston Churchill began his office as Prime Minister, 1940. Tomorrow: the Feast Day of St Alphonsus, St Antoninus of Florence, St Calpodius, St Cataldo or Catal, St Conleth or Conleth, St Epimachus, St Gordian, St John of Avila and St Solange.

FAITH & REASON

God's secret intention for the people of Brentwood

Has the Conservative Party been infiltrated by a born-again sect? Trevor Barnes reports

SOME years ago, in my trainee reporter days, I was dispatched to cover an Easter Passion Play put on by amateurs at Rochester Cathedral. I turned up at an evening rehearsal to confront good cheer, enthusiasm, children by the carload - and for good measure, an incontinent donkey sauntering up the nave. The whole project had been the brainchild of a spirited local woman whose name I have now forgotten. But I have never been able to get out of my head her stated motivation for staging the event. "I felt the Lord was asking me to do something," she said, "and He was asking me to do it for Tonbridge."

For Tonbridge. A nice touch, that. I had to admit that God is nothing if not specific when He has to be.

I thought back to Rochester on Thursday night when polling day brought out the faithful of Brentwood in Essex for the final count at the town's leisure centre. True, they were entirely different events but the introduction of personal religious convictions into

otherwise neutral pursuits - in one case staging a pageant and in the other fighting the local elections - seemed to be a common thread and one that appears to be weaving itself more and more frequently into the fabric of British public life. Not every one is happy about it.

I should perhaps first explain that the citizens of Brentwood have not been born again en masse. After all, this part of the world owes more to the Green rather than the Bible Belt. However, in recent weeks the activities of a local Pentecostal church have forced religion, uncharacteristically, into the news. It all began when the local Conservative Association noticed a dramatic increase in its membership. By January it had suddenly risen from 16 to 118. Now it is over 200. Delight turned to suspicion when it became clear that the new members had one thing in common. They all belonged to the Peniel Pentecostal Church, a thriving Christian fellowship based in, you've guessed it, *Peniel's Hatch*.

As the local Tories found themselves having to adjust to the ways of the newcomers there was talk of "takeover" and "infiltration". All of it was strenuously denied by the church whose leader, a powerful and charismatic former policeman, Michael Reid, said church members were merely exercising their

democratic rights to take part in local politics for the common good. They were, he said, Tories who happened to be Christians. Even so some local officials smelled a rat. Why were they suddenly so interested in the Conservative Party now? Why hadn't that same 118 joined the Tory footsolders as they took to the doorstep for the General Election? In short, what was their ulterior motive?

There was none, the Church explained. Democratic rights, desire to make a difference, need to put Christian values of honesty and integrity back into political life etc, etc. Nothing suspicious at all.

Veteran Tories were not reassured and they prepared themselves for the inevitable dispute and division. The extent to which the local Conservative association is divided was there to see on Thursday. One rossette but two factions, each inclined to view the other with caution. Such a shame that the mere mention of religion in the same breath as politics seems to create an uneasy lull in any conversation. But it does.

It has to be said that of the five Peniel Conservatives fighting for election on Thursday at least two were far from being catty political virgins lured into the fray after prayerful consideration. They were local Tory politicians of long standing, seasoned campaigners who

"just happened to be Christians". In the time-honoured way beloved of all activists of whatever religious or political affiliation they interpreted defeat as victory and pointed to the increased vote they had managed to secure. Again, some non-Peniel workers were unconvinced. They had been torn, they said, between the desire to vote Conservative and their reluctance to endorse "church-sponsored" candidates. Personally they had nothing against them as individuals. It was their affiliation to the controversial Peniel fellowship which was causing concern. "I don't think the Conservative Association will survive," said one.

In the event the Liberal Democrats hung on to overall control with the Conservatives losing one contested seat. As we filed out of the hall just before midnight a defeated but buoyant Peniel man confronted the possibility that the result might just be God's way of telling him something. "If He is telling me something," he said, "I'm too tired to listen and I'm going home for a cup of tea." Equally defiant in defeat, his colleagues made their exits too, fired by the promise, "We'll be back."

And they will, too, unmoved by comments from within their own party that religion and politics don't mix. Nowadays, it seems, increasingly, they do. I blame the Government.

Second-line rail companies could be next bid target

MARKET REPORT



DEREK PAIN

TWO of the stock market's second-line rail companies are looking increasingly vulnerable to takeover strikes.

GB Railways, running the Anglia franchise, is seen as a target for FirstGroup; Prism Rail, which started with the London Tilbury and Southend services, is another possible FirstGroup target, although some wonder whether it, too, has its sights on GB.

Shares of GB steamed ahead 25p to a 231.5p peak, capitalising the company at £19m. The much bigger Prism gained 7.5p to 402.5p.

FirstGroup, with bus and train interests, was little changed at 406p. Stagecoach improved 15p to 1.205p and National Express 6.5p to 993.5p.

Small, unquoted transport companies have in recent months found themselves on the receiving end of generous bids. GB and Prism, both traded on the junior AIM market, could be the next to fall.

The stock market enjoyed the May sunshine. Once again supporting shares made the running with Footsie, after some hesitation, scoring a 31.8 points gain to 5,969.8. Around lunchtime it was down 39.5 but a strong New York display, on the back of jobs figures, helped sentiment.

But supporting shares captured the glory. The mid cap and small cap indices stretched to new peaks; the mid cap jumping 38.4 to 5,741.1 and the small cap 18.7 to 3,704.6.

More takeover action on the under card prompted gains. Three companies said they were in bid talks. Concentric, an engineer, put on 38p to 145.5p; Gibbon, a maker of printing inks, achieved a 48p gain to 213.5p and SDX Business Systems jumped 58p to 353.5p. But Trust Motor reversed 31p to 165p after bid talks broke down.

Nycomed non-voters, probably the most volatile Footsie share, led blue chips with a 159p surge to 2,009p. Reuters, BTR and Unilever were among other Footsie front runners.

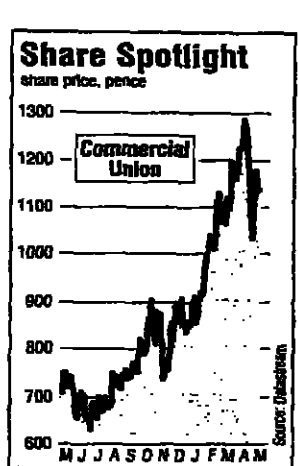
Super stores drifted. Asda lost 5p to 189p and Tesco 8p to 560p. Safeway, due to report next week, recovered a 12p to close up 3p to 368p.

The chain's year's figures will be poor. It has already warned that trading is tough and many believe it is only the possibility of an Asda bid which has prevented the shares bumping along at around 300p. The year's results are expected to be around £375m, down from £430m.

Insurers Commercial Union and General Accident, merging to form CGU, will report for the last time as separate companies next week. Their combined first-quarter profits are likely to be less than half what the two made

in the same period last year. CU ended 12p higher at 1,140p and GenAcc shaded 2p to 1,528p.

EMI dipped 2p to 573p as doubts about a bid continued to weigh on the shares. After hours, it said talks had been terminated. BOC, figures next week, fell 33.5p to 976.5p as Dresdner Kleinwort Benson lowered its recommendation



for the chemical group from hold to sell.

Christie's International, the auctioneer, hardened 21.5p to 317p. Stories that the Bahamas-based tycoon Joseph Lewis collected 400p a share for the 29 per cent stake he sold to French investor Francois Pinault are causing a stir. Because the share deal was concluded outside the market there appears to be no need for either party to disclose the price, leaving the way clear for rumours to circulate and possibly create a false market.

If Mr Pinault did pay as much as 400p he would have to offer the same price to other shareholders, should he mount a takeover bid. There is increasing speculation that he is not the passive investor some suggested when he swooped.

Capita, the business support group, strengthened 28.5p to 574.5p on investment meetings and Verity put on 2p to 103.5p following more

licences for its Nxt wafer-thin sound technology.

Digital television presentations lifted Carlton Communications 9.5p to 517p and Granada 4p to 1.087p. Pace Micro, a boxtop maker, jumped 7.5p to 82.5p.

Geo Interactive Media firmed 2.5p to 164p after revealing it hoped to place 18 million shares, raising at least £19m, as part of a move from AIM to full listing. The placing will be between 125p and 150p a share.

Centab Pharmaceuticals was the day's drugs winner, jumping 61.5p to 687.5p. Behind the surge was a claim that its gene technology had proved successful at transporting cancer-killing protein.

NFC, the old National Freight, motored 11p to 187.5p. A share buyback is due to start soon and Robert Fleming Securities rates the shares, forecasting profits will climb from a depressed £67m to £125m this year.

TAKING STOCK

THE Ambishus Pub Co, with just 31 outlets, enjoyed a rare old ferment. First dealings saw the shares surge from a 100p introduction to 325p; they settled at 265p. The obscure company has all the ingredients to make an impact. Its backers include David Bruce, creator of the Firkin pub concept, Michael Cannon (JA Devenish and The Magic Pub Co) and entrepreneur Luke Johnson (PizzExpress). Chairman is Philip Snook who used to be managing director of The Magic Pub Co. Managing director Colin Stevens signalled expansion. The company had already been contacted by companies interested in being acquired.

BIRSE, a construction group, gained 3.5p to 22.5p on takeover speculation. After a winding loss-making run, it has made profits in the past two years. At the interim stage profits of £2,086,000 were ahead of last year's total. Some expect £5m for the year just ended.

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Investment Trusts																			
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Leisure & Hotels																			
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Life Assurance																			
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Media																			
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Pharmaceuticals																			
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Share Price Data																			
Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is the latest twelve month declared gross dividend as a percentage of the share price. The performance (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, including extraordinary items but excluding exceptional items. Other details in figures: ex-dividend, a float; a secondary; a primary; a float																			

BMW will fight VW for control of Rolls

By Michael Harrison

THE BATTLE for control of Rolls-Royce Motor Cars was threatening to degenerate into an unseemly legal squabble last night after BMW indicated it would rely on spoiling tactics to thwart the agreed £430m offer from its German rival Volkswagen.

BMW, whose £340m bid was discarded by Rolls' parent company Vickers in favour of the higher VW offer, said it would not get involved in a "dutch auction" for the company, suggesting it will not attempt to increase its offer.

Instead BMW is relying upon Rolls-Royce plc, the aero-engine maker which owns the Rolls-Royce name, to use its legal rights to block the transfer of the trade name to VW. As a further frustrating tactic, BMW repeated its intention to stop supplying engines for Rolls' latest models, the Silver Seraph and the Bentley Arnage, if the sale to VW went ahead - which could prompt a damages claim from Vickers.

BMW is due to outline its strategy in a statement early next week. Sources at the Munich-based company indicated it would not include an increased offer for Rolls.

Rolls-Royce plc has made no secret of its support for the offer from BMW, with which it already has a joint venture to make aircraft engines. In a statement yesterday the aero-engine group said it would "take whatever action is necessary or appropriate" to protect its interests.

The statement made no reference to VW but it pointedly "welcomed" the initial announcement by Vickers that it had agreed to sell Rolls to BMW, even though this was superseded this week by the improved VW offer.

Vickers is recommending that shareholders reject the BMW offer and instead approve the sale of Rolls to VW at an extraordinary meeting

on 4 June.

In its statement yesterday the aero-engine maker said it was confident that it would be able to conclude a definitive agreement with BMW for the use of the Rolls-Royce name.

It also said that the European Commission had upheld its rights to the Rolls-Royce name under a 1973 agreement, including the right to veto the transfer of the name to a non-UK owner.

Vickers maintains that the clause is unenforceable and a breach of EU competition law. It also argued that if the aero-engine company carried out its threat to block the deal it would end up damaging the name. "The halo effect of the Rolls-Royce name comes from the motor car and goes to the aero-engine company, not the other way around," she added.

Under the engine contract, either party has to give the other 12 months notice of its intention to terminate the supply agreement. However, it is understood that BMW only has to give Rolls six months notice in the event that the company is transferred to a rival car maker.

BMW does not believe this would give VW sufficient time to find an alternative supply of engines, forcing it to close down the Rolls production line at Crewe.

But a VW board member, Robert Buechelhof, indicated yesterday that it had contingency plans. "We are going on the idea that a solution of this problem would be possible in the short term," he said.

VW has offered to buy Cosworth from Vickers and then use that as a source of engine supplies. Cosworth adapts the V12 and V6 engines that BMW currently supplies for the Seraph and Bentley. VW also has its own V12 engine under development but it is not clear that would be available in time for commercial production should BMW carry out its threat to stop engine supplies.



Gordon Brown meets children in a Jakarta slum. Tackling social problems needed world support, he said

US jobless rate at new low

THE US unemployment rate tumbled to a 28-year low of 4.3 per cent in April as the supercharged American economy churned out 262,000 new jobs, with only manufacturing showing any ill effects from the Asian currency crisis.

The unemployment rate was down from 4.7 per cent in March. Meanwhile, payroll employment outside the farm sector grew last month by a brisk 262,000, recovering from a revised 24,000 decline in jobs in March.

While the payroll employment gain was just slightly above the 259,000 Wall Street economists had expected, the steep drop in the unemployment rate was a surprise and helped to push prices down in the US bond market.

In addition to hitting its lowest level since February 1970, the jobless rate posted its largest one-month point drop since May 1994.

The 0.4 percentage point drop in the unemployment rate underscored just how strong the US economy remains and is likely to increase pressure on the Federal Reserve to

start raising interest rates to cool things down to prevent inflation from re-igniting.

"We now have a labour market that is as tight as can be," said Robert Dederick, economist at Northern Trust in Chicago. "You have to reach into the nooks and crannies to get workers in the United States now."

Cynthia Latta, an economist at Standard and Poor's DRI, said yesterday's report made a Fed rate hike much more likely. She noted that the closely watched figure on hourly earnings showed wages were 4.4 per cent higher than a year ago, a level she said would cause concern at the central bank about wage pressures.

Wall Street, which has seen a recent weeks over rising and falling concerns about Fed rate hikes, shrugged off jitters over monetary policy and toasted news that the economy was in great shape. By mid-morning in New York, the Dow Jones industrial average was up almost 90 points at 9066.

The US job market, which has been exceptionally strong over the

past year, hit a bout of weakness in March as cooler-than-normal weather put a damper on hiring in construction and other industries.

Hiring made a strong comeback, with job gains occurring in a number of key industries led by services. However, the manufacturing sector lost 10,000 jobs in April following a 7,000 decline in March.

Workers continued to rack up steady increases in their pay rates. Average hourly earnings rose by 4 cents to \$12.67. Year-on-year, average hourly earnings were up 4.4 percent, the biggest increase since a matching 12-month rise in November 1993.

The rise in earnings was another negative factor for the bond market, as it further underlined fears of wage inflation.

"The thing that really sticks out is the average hourly earnings, for which we had been told to expect a low number... We got a high number," said Simon Cook, head of trading at Co-operative Bank in London.

- Agencies

Brown wants 'yellow card' IMF warnings

By Diane Coyle
Economics Editor

GORDON BROWN, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, called on his fellow finance ministers from the Group of Seven to agree to a "yellow card" system of public warnings for countries that fail to adopt measures recommended by the International Monetary Fund.

The Chancellor, hosting a two-day G7 meeting yesterday and today, said: "There must be some recourse for the international institutions if their advice is persistently ignored." The IMF has been criticised for not drawing attention earlier to Asia's problems, but its defence is that it had privately been advising governments in the affected countries to alter course.

Mr Brown's proposal got a cautious welcome from the IMF itself. Michel Camdessus, the Fund's managing director, said: "I do not need to emphasise how important it is to know exactly when the referee has shown a yellow card and how many yellow cards are permitted."

The finance ministers, meeting in London, discussed lessons to be drawn from the Asian financial crisis and agreed a series of recommendations to be put to the G8 heads of government meeting in Birmingham next weekend.

As well as the public warnings proposal, the finance ministers agreed there was a need for greater openness in economic policy, better co-ordination in order to improve what has become known as the "international financial architecture", and closer involvement of private sector lenders in bailing countries out of financial crises.

The IMF has been asked to draw up a code of conduct for monetary and financial policies and a code for accounting and corporate governance standards that its member countries should sign up to. It has already started work on a code for government fiscal policies. Member countries would be asked to adopt these codes.

Mr Brown said the state of the Japanese economy, and the new stimulus package, would be a central issue in the G7 discussions. "It is in everybody's interest that the

Japanese economy recovers quickly," he said.

Earlier G7 meetings openly criticised the Japanese government for not doing enough. Yesterday Robert Rubin, the US Treasury Secretary, welcomed the measures but urged further progress on structural economic reforms.

Mr Rubin and Hikaru Matsunaga, Japan's finance minister, repeated their earlier commitment to co-operate in the foreign exchange markets and expressed concern that the yen should not be "excessively" weak.

This helped take the yen slightly higher on the foreign exchanges. The pound weakened against the dollar yesterday, ending at 1.637. It closed at 2.895 against the German mark.

The Chancellor, just back from a swift tour of South East Asia, was also keen to emphasise the importance of tackling the social problems triggered by the financial crisis. "They have got to be addressed now, with world support," he said.

But Mr Brown added that political reform was also needed. Referring to Indonesia, where riots have alarmed the financial markets, he said: "The economic reform they agree is necessary must be accompanied by... political reform with respect to individual rights and by social reform as well."

He defended the IMF against accusations that its programmes had triggered social unrest, saying failure to implement the fund's structural reform programmes would make the poor even greater victims of the crisis.

Mr Camdessus too said it was essential to make sure that the poorest people shared in the benefits of economic globalisation.

The continuing economic difficulties in Japan remain a cause for concern, said the European monetary affairs commissioner, Yves Thibault de Silguy.

He told a news conference the recent stimulus package announced by the Japanese government was impressive and a step in the right direction, but a full and rapid implementation of the package was vital. More needed to be done to boost the Japanese economy, including implementing tax cuts.

EMI pulls out of talks on takeover

EMI, the music group, yesterday surprised the City by announcing it had terminated takeover talks eight days after confirming it was in negotiations.

The company said that despite discussions lasting several weeks, no offer has been received from the third party, widely believed to be Canadian drinks and entertainment giant Seagram, "and the board has informed the other party that it is not willing to let the uncertainty continue".

The initial announcement on 30 April prompted a sharp rise in EMI's share price. Yesterday's development was too late for the stock market to react.

The announcement came days after the Dutch music and film giant PolyGram was effectively put on the block after Philips Electronics said it was considering options for its 75 per cent stake. Analysts believe EMI's suitor may now be interested in PolyGram.

Hilldown to be split up

By Andrew Yates

HILLSDOWN Holdings, the Typhoo tea to Buxton chickens group chaired by Sir John Nott, the former Defence Secretary, announced yesterday that it planned to break itself up in an effort to reverse its dismal performance on the stock market over the last few years.

Hilldown plans to create three quoted companies by demerging its Fairview homes business and its chilled food division, which provides foods and salads to chains such as Marks & Spencer.

The group is also proposing a raft of disposals including its furniture division, which comprises brands such as Christie-Tyler, Walker & Homer and Carleton.

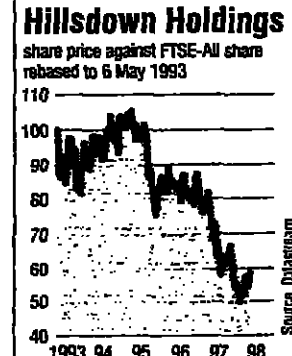
In addition Ross Breder, a market leader in genetically improving chickens for breeding, Buxton chickens, its potatoes business and the

Continental European biscuits and wines and spirits operations will all be sold off. Hilldown hopes to raise up to £600m from disposals, the majority of which will be returned to shareholders rather than spent on new acquisitions.

After the disposals Hilldown will be a pure grocery group, retaining famous brands such as Typhoo and Chivers. But the changes are likely to see the Hilldown name, which has been around for 28 years, disappear.

Hilldown also plans to slash the size of its £10m head office overhead and will undergo a radical boardroom shake up although there will not be widespread job losses throughout the group.

George Greener, the group's chief executive for the last two years, who has been instrumental in orchestrating the break-up of the



group, plans to step down to be succeeded by Michael Teacher, a divisional director. Mr Greener could receive a pay off of around £400,000. Ray Mackie, Hilldown's finance director, is also leaving the group.

Analysts predict Fairview New Homes could be valued at more than £300m, while the chilled food division could be worth £400m. They have placed a break up value of

around 200p on the group. Hilldown's shares closed at 189p yesterday, up 2.5p.

Hilldown is the latest in a long line of conglomerates, including former stock market stars such as Hanson, who have decided to do the splits after falling out of favour with the City. It shares have underperformed the stock market by almost 50 per cent over the last five years.

Asked why the group had not chosen to split itself up before, Mr Greener said: "Hilldown was a very large, diversified conglomerate. Last year we disposed of 10 businesses which created the platform for a radical solution."

Sir John Nott said: "We believe that the restructuring proposals we have outlined today, which are both imaginative and far-reaching, will deliver increased value to our shareholders."

British Digital needs 2m subscribers to break even

By Peter Thal Larsen

BRITISH Digital Broadcasting, the joint venture between the television groups Granada and Carlton, yesterday said it was on track to launch digital in the fourth quarter of this year and claimed it would need 2 million subscribers to break even.

But in their first formal presentation to analysts, BDB officials gave no indication when the company might reach that level.

"It will make profits of more than £100m with 3 million subscribers, and with 5 million subscribers that figure rises to £250m," Stephen Grabner, BDB chief executive, said in a statement after the meeting.

Disclosing their first detailed forecasts, company officials highlighted the perceived advantages of their terrestrial ven-

ture over its satellite and cable rivals. With the launch of digital television this year, British viewers will be able to plug into a plethora of channels offering sharper images and CD-quality sound compared with the five standard channels that most people currently watch.

Three digital television groups will be vying for viewers' subscription fees, with BDB and the satellite company BSkyB seen as the biggest rivals in the race to dominate the pay-television market.

Shares in the media companies were little changed after the news, with Carlton up 9.5p at 517, Granada down 4p at 1087, and BSkyB up 1.5p. BDB's launch will offer at least 15 channels with a capacity of up to 30 compared with the 200-channel satellite service that BSkyB plans to begin rolling out next month.

However, BDB's terrestrial service will be available over viewers' existing televisions and aerials, whereas consumers will have to buy a new satellite dish to receive BSkyB's channels.

Regardless of which service they choose, viewers will need to buy a set-top decoding box for about £200 to get the new digital channels.

BDB said a recent poll by the research firm NOP found that consumers most interested in taking up digital television were five times more likely to subscribe to terrestrial rather than satellite services.

The research also indicated that up to one million people were prepared within the first year to pay £199 for a set-top box.

BDB said it would develop a call centre with British Telecom to manage customer service.

Yesterday in the markets

STOCK MARKETS

Indices	Close	Change	Change (%)	52 wk high	52 wk low	Yield (%)
FTSE 100	5069.80	31.80	0.54	6150.50	4382.80	3.37
FTSE 250	5741.10	38.40	0.67	5706.50	4384.20	2.82
FTSE 350	2687.90	16.20	0.56	2938.70	2141.80	3.26
FTSE All Share	2819.13	16.00	0.57	2861.12	2106.59	3.23
FTSE SmallCap	2704.60	18.70	0.70	2685.90	2182.10	2.98
FTSE Floating	1449.00	10.60	0.74	1438.40	1225.20	3.13
FTSE AIM	1086.40	5.10	0.47	1085.70	965.90	1.06
FTSE EURO 100	1001.99	12.11	1.22	1081.91	697.12	1.56
Dow Jones	9096.11	90.43	1.01	10910.79	14486.21	1.00
Nikkei	15149.00	597	0.04	20910.79	7909.13	3.97
Hang Seng	10080.38	88.45	0.89	16820.31	7909.13	3.97
Dax	5257.58	71.35	1.38	5442.00	3487.24	1.53

INTEREST RATES

Short sterling 		UK 10 year gilt 		US long bond 																																																								
Money Market Rates <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Index</th> <th>3 month</th> <th>1 yr</th> <th>5 year</th> <th>10 year</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>UK</td> <td>7.44</td> <td>0.92</td> <td>7.44</td> <td>0.44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>US</td> <td>5.69</td> <td>0.16</td> <td>5.88</td> <td>0.44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Japan</td> <td>0.56</td> <td>0.02</td> <td>0.59</td> <td>0.25</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Germany</td> <td>3.95</td> <td>0.47</td> <td>3.97</td> <td>0.62</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Index	3 month	1 yr	5 year	10 year	UK	7.44	0.92	7.44	0.44	US	5.69	0.16	5.88	0.44	Japan	0.56	0.02	0.59	0.25	Germany	3.95	0.47	3.97	0.62	Bond Yields <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>3 month</th> <th>1 yr</th> <th>5 year</th> <th>10 year</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>UK</td> <td>5.86</td> <td>-1.17</td> <td>5.79</td> <td>-1.2</td> </tr> <tr> <td>US</td> <td>5.88</td> <td>-1.05</td> <td>5.98</td> <td>-1.0</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Japan</td> <td>1.80</td> <td>-0.75</td> <td>1.86</td> <td>-0.6</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Germany</td> <td>4.98</td> <td>-0.79</td> <td>5.56</td> <td>-0.6</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			3 month	1 yr	5 year	10 year	UK	5.86	-1.17	5.79	-1.2	US	5.88	-1.05	5.98	-1.0	Japan	1.80	-0.75	1.86	-0.6	Germany	4.98	-0.79	5.56	-0.6							
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CURRENCIES

\$/£				DM/£				¥/£							
at Spot				Change				Yr Ago							
Dollar				1.6385				-1.00c				1.6191			
D-Mark				2.8990				-0.830p				2.7721			
Yen				217.57				¥1.90				200.17			
S. Index				103.40				0.00				98.80			

Pound				Dollar											
at Spot				Change				Yr Ago							
D-Mark				0.6103				+0.37p				0.6176			
D-Mark				1.7711				---				1.6870			
Yen				132.83				¥0.27				123.66			
S. Index				109.40				0.00				104.80			

OTHER INDICATORS				
at Spot	at Spot	at Spot	at Spot	at Spot
Gold (\$)	13.99	0.17	18.85	
Wheat (\$)	299.85	1.15	343.78	
Silver (\$)	6.01	0.13	4.83	

Base Rates				
at Spot	at Spot	at Spot	at Spot	at Spot
Index	114.60	2.80	111.48	Jul
RPI	180.80	3.50	155.36	May
Base Rates	7.25	6.25		

www.bloomberg.com/uk

Source: Bloomberg

TOURIST RATES

Australia (\$)	2.4841	Malta (lira)	0.6202
Austria (schilling)	19.79	Mexican (nuevo peso)	12.69
Belgium (franc)	58.20	Netherlands (guilder)	3.1746
Canada (\$)	2.2980	New Zealand (\$)	2.9072
Cyprus (pound)	0.8256	Norway (krone)	11.86
Denmark (krone)	10.82	Portugal (escudo)	288.08
Finland (markka)	8.6340	Saudi Arabia (rifle)	5.9822
France (franc)	9.4546	Singapore (\$)	2.5253
Germany (mark)	2.8311	Spain (peseta)	208.99
Greece (drachma)	489.29	South Africa (rand)	7.9799
Hong Kong (\$)	12.34	Sweden (krone)	12.22
Ireland (pound)	1.1181	Switzerland (franc)	2.3683
India (rupee)	80.01	Thailand (baht)	57.56
Israel (shekel)	5.6160	Turkey (lira)	394154
Italy (lira)	2791	USA (\$)	1.6036
Japan (yen)	213.97		
Malaysia (ringgit)	5.9197		

Notes for indication purposes only
Source: Thomas Cook



JEREMY WARNER ON HOW WIM DUISENBERG MIGHT OPERATE AT THE EUROPEAN CENTRAL BANK

Whatever happened to gentlemanly behaviour?

THE THING about gentlemen's agreements is that no one, apart from those who agree them, is meant to know of their existence. It works like this. You and I agree on a course of action which neither of us likes very much, but we think a reasonable compromise in the circumstances. Since subjecting it to public scrutiny would involve one or both of us in loss of face, and the credibility of what we are doing would as a consequence be undermined, we have to trust each other to carry it out without formal contract. It's our little secret, just between you and me.

The fiasco of a deal that was hammered out in Brussels last weekend over the presidency of the European Central Bank, under which Wim Duisenberg "voluntarily" cuts short his term and makes way after four years for Jean-Claude Trichet, was meant to be a gentleman's agreement too. Unfortunately it fell a long way short of the model.

First, the manner in which it was born was the very reverse of gentlemanly behaviour. It was hard-fought brinkmanship right to the end, and it is impossible to avoid the conclusion it wouldn't have happened at all but for the fact that the very future of the euro was threatened.

Second, having apparently agreed it with all parties, Tony Blair then announced it to an incredulous world, thus breaking one

of the cardinal rules of the gentleman's agreement - that it shouldn't be made public. This was because the French insisted it be made public, so there could be no question of it being reneged on, and so that everyone would know La France had scored a victory. Plainly Jacques Chirac does not believe either in modesty or gentlemen.

Later Mr Blair tried to gloss over the reality even further by saying that long ago Mr Duisenberg had made it clear he would not serve the full eight years in view of his age, which is 62. So he was always going to go early and there's nothing new about that. But though Mr Blair might like to believe nothing of significance has happened, the rest of us know differently.

Third, Mr Duisenberg then denied there had been an agreement as such, describing the notion of the plan outlined by Mr Blair as "absurd", and saying it was not impossible he would stay longer than four years. So much for gentlemen.

All this is in marked contrast to the gentleman's agreement everyone suspects exists between the British Chancellor, Gordon Brown, and the Governor of the Bank of England, Eddie George. It will be recalled that Mr George was recently awarded a second five-year term, to run from July. For choice, the Chancellor would have had a change at the top, but a lack of credible alternatives, not to men-

tion pressure from the Prime Minister and the City, eventually persuaded him that continuity was the better path.

However, no one would find it in the least bit surprising if Mr George retired with a going before his second five-year term is up, having by then seen through the important tasks of separating the bank's supervisory from its monetary policy functions and established the credibility of the bank as an independent determinant of interest rates. If there is such an agreement, it is not admitted to.

The whole point of these things is that though there might be a political fix, it should not be seen to exist. The effect would be to undermine the credibility of an institution which is meant to be free from political interference. In the shenanigans over the ECB, the politics of the situation was as visible as a 32-tonne truck. It would have been impossible to miss it. Mr Duisenberg then went on to irritate the wound further by describing the manner of his appointment as "absurd".

The upshot is that the integrity of the ECB has to some extent already been compromised. To what degree, and whether in the long run it matters very much, are more difficult questions to answer. Much depends on how Mr Duisenberg steers his course. So what sort of a man is he, and what can the markets expect of him?

Certainly, he seems of strongly independent character, unafraid to speak his mind whatever the embarrassment caused. That's got to be positive, as perhaps is his liking for country music, which distinguishes him quite markedly from other grey-suited central bankers. Before MEPs this week, he gave a bravura performance of some daring, insisting, among other things, that the Bank of England's practice of publishing the minutes of its monetary policy committee meetings was wrong. Not for 16 years would that happen with the ECB, he said, since the effect was to encourage market speculation and harden positions within the board.

OK, so transparency is out. If the ECB is to be truly independent, then it has to be so in private, he seemed to be saying. This is probably not such a good sign, demonstrating that Mr Duisenberg does not understand markets as fully as he should. If the markets know nothing about the decision-making process, they will speculate even more actively. Will it be the Italians, Spanish, Germans or perhaps even the Irish who get the upper hand in monetary policy this month? All this will be grist to the speculators' mill. There is a real chance of chaos as politicians trumpet their national interest into this vacuum of knowledge.

Mr Duisenberg is also known as an in-

flation-busting hawk. Recently he was voted in a poll of analysts the most hawkish central banker in Europe. Judging by his record, we ought to expect a hard-line, ultra-conservative approach to policy. With the pound already decisively off its peak against the mark, financial markets are beginning to anticipate just that. The change in sentiment is tangible.

Even two months ago it was still fashionable to think of sterling as a safe haven from a weak euro. Now it seems that sterling's strength may have been a cyclical thing after all. Further, the euro might be operated as a hard, strong currency, the more so after last weekend's fiasco, since the ECB will have something to prove. So many European leaders are puffing out their chests and talking in terms of the euro rapidly becoming a reserve currency capable of looking the dollar in the face that perhaps we should expect nothing less.

These are early days, however, and we shouldn't count on any such outcome. The ECB is not De Nederlandsche Bank, the small and perfectly formed central bank where Mr Duisenberg earned his reputation. Keeping the lid on a potentially unruly 17 member multinational board is a different order of challenge altogether. Certainly, this will not be a board capable of being managed on the basis of agreement between gentlemen.

Fund group makes 'dash for cash'

By Andrew Varity

SCOTTISH Equitable yesterday became the first fund manager in eight months to make a public "dash for cash", saying it had been prompted by fear of exaggerated profit forecasts.

The life insurer's fund management arm, Scottish Equitable Asset Management, said it believed analysts were overstating corporate earnings by as much as 3 per cent.

Profit forecasts by analysts put UK corporate earnings at 8 per cent in 1998 - but Scottish Equitable said its own analysts put the figure closer to 5 per cent.

Alistair Byrne, investment strategist, said: "We don't think the forecasts fairly discount the slowdown in UK economic growth this year and they don't take account of the sustained strength of the pound up until now. It does have implications for the valuations [of listed companies]."

Mr Byrne said analysts' forecasts appeared sometimes to be influenced by their employment in the same firm as stockbrokers.



Well served: The notes were bought by insurance firms

US funds for Greenalls

GREENALLS, the pubs and hotels group, yesterday completed a private placement of \$125m (£75m) 10-year guaranteed senior notes. The proceeds will be used initially to repay short-term bank indebtedness and will provide a committed source of funds to support planned investment in the medium term. The notes were purchased by a group of US insurance companies. Alan Rothwell, the finance director, said he was delighted to return to the US market "in order to provide a continuing source of long-term capital to finance the continued expansion of our businesses".

Thomson offer in shares chaos

By Michael Harrison

THE TOUR operator Thomson last night announced a deal to placate the thousands of investors who have missed out on buying shares in the group's flotation because they were not sent application forms in time.

Thomson said any investor who had registered for an application form with a share map by the close of registrations last Sunday will be eligible for honorary membership of its founders club - which entitles them to 10 per cent off holiday prices.

The honorary membership will last until 31 December this year, enabling aggrieved investors to book a cut-price holiday for this summer.

Investors can then extend their honorary membership into a full membership by buying the minimum number of shares allocated in the offering. This will be decided tomorrow and announced on Monday when trading in Thomson shares begins.

Thomson has agreed to set up a low-cost share dealing service to enable those investors who are eligible to take advantage of the arrangements.

More than 600,000 investors registered for the flotation and up to 500,000 are thought to have applied for shares. Thomson said the number of investors who had applied for an application form and either not received one or not been able to get their forms back on time was less than 10,000.

The arrangement was struck after negotiations with Thomson's brokers, SBC Warburg Dillon Read. The brokers had looked at the alternative of allocating extra shares for those who can prove early registration.

In order to qualify for the offer investors will have to write to Thomson in London giving the name and address under which they registered for an application and the name of the share shop they went through. Thomson will then check

its registration records to verify that a registration was received within the deadline.

The strong demand for the shares is likely to mean them being priced at the top end of the 140p to 170p range. The price will be announced on Monday.

If there were to be a sharp fall in the stock market in the next seven months, then honorary members of the Thomson travel group could pick up the requisite number of shares to qualify for the discount holidays more cheaply than those who successfully applied in the public offer.

Thomson said it had encouraged investors to get their forms back early, especially because of the Bank holiday last weekend. It believed that a few thousand investors had been caught by the delay in receiving application forms.

The flotation is the biggest public offer since the heyday of the last Government's privatisation issues.

Commodities executive fined and expelled

THE Securities and Futures Authority (SFA), the financial markets watchdog, has fined and expelled a former executive of commodities trader TRX Futures, part of Germany's Neumann Gruppe. The SFA said it has expelled John Alexander Vieira Ribeiro from its registers of directors and senior executive officers, fined him £30,000 plus £8,100 in costs and has deemed him "not to be a fit and proper person to be registered with the SFA". The case relates to \$450,000 (£270,000) of "surplus funds" which had been on the books of TRX Futures which Ribeiro later moved to accounts which were unrelated to the Neumann Gruppe.

Pillar to buy retail park

PILLAR Property has formed a partnership to buy Fosse Park Shopping Park in Leicester for £145.5m from SPP Investment management. The partnership is a joint venture with Schroder Exempt Property Unit Trust and SITQ International Inc, a subsidiary of Caisse de depot et placements du Quebec. The partnership would also buy Fosse Park South, which was bought by Pillar last year. The combined value of the two parks is in the region of £205.5m.

Northern warns on changes

NORTHERN Rock has attacked the process of telling customers of changes to their bank accounts, calling it "bureaucratic and potentially expensive". Adam Applegarth, executive director, said his company would notify every saver each time it changed interest rates or launched a new product. "It is however a bureaucratic and expensive exercise [which] may well be unrealistic for larger institutions," he said. The comments come a day after Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said she was extremely concerned at the behaviour of some banks. Last month, Northern Rock angered customers by switching thousands of them into three new bank accounts. Many will suffer lower interest rates.

Wembley chief quits

ALAN Coppin, Wembley's chief executive, is leaving to join Compass Group. He will remain as chief executive until 30 September in which role he will continue to be responsible for overseeing the disposal of Wembley Stadium to the English National Stadium Trust. A new chief executive is being sought.

Newton in talks with US bank

FOREIGN interest in British investment banks was underlined after Newton Asset Management was linked with Mellon Bank of the US. Mellon Bank is believed to be in advanced talks with Newton, which manages £10bn and is worth around £150m. City sources confirmed they were still advising big US banks on acquisitions in the UK. According to Bacon & Woodrow, the investment consultants, US banks fear they will fall behind Europe as the Euro takes effect.

Listing for Geo

GEO Interactive Media Group, a developer of innovative Internet application multimedia software, is to move up the main market from the Alternative Investment Market with a placing of new shares. The listing will be by way of a placing of 18 million new ordinary shares in the company at between 125p and 150p each to raise £19.75m.

COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Brexit Travel Group (I)	- (-)	0.882m (0.503m)	6.42p (3.70p)	2.0 (1.3p)
Parsons GIL (P)	567.22m (561.85m)	4.584m (3.480m)	0.26p (0.22p)	nil (nil)
(P) - Final (I) - Interim 1 EPS is pre-exceptional * Dividend to be paid as a PD				

WHO'S SUING WHO

JOHN WILLCOCK



THE COLLAPSE of Robert Feld's Resort Hotels group four years ago and his subsequent jailing for fraud continues to produce great waves of litigation. There are at least nine writs in circulation so far from various parties, seeking compensation over the £20m fraud. The strangest writs must surely be those from Roberta Feld, Mr Feld's sister, who is suing him for the money she lost in the Resort Hotel failure.

Even though Mr Feld is currently serving a six-year sentence at Coldingley Open Prison (recently reduced from eight years), he is also being sued by his sister together with his wife Tara, who is acting on behalf of his late mother.

Both writs have been issued via Harkavys, the solicitors who previously represented Mr Feld during his criminal trial last year. Both writs are against Mr Feld, three other Resort directors, and the company's auditors Coopers & Lybrand. Mr Feld's mother's estate lost £200,000 when Resort went bust.

Meanwhile last week solicitors Edwin Coe issued two writs against Mr Feld and his

professional advisers on behalf of shareholders who also lost out. Both writs concern a prospectus for a rights issue published on 30 April 1992 by Mr Feld, who forged the figures to make the business look more successful than it was. The rights issue aimed to raise £20.6m.

In one writ 252 individual shareholders are demanding damages from the remains of Resort Hotels, Mr Feld and 14 other defendants, including Coopers the auditors, Barclays De Zoete Wedd, the brokers to the issue, and a raft of nominee companies such as Barclay Share Nominees Limited.

This writ has been prompted by the Resort Hotels Shareholders Action Group, founded after a company meeting in 1993 which vividly revealed the parlous state of the company's finances. The group represents over 500 shareholders and is chaired by John Bancroft, who is named as one of the plaintiffs of last week's writ.

Other plaintiffs include The Leukaemia Research Fund, which invested £31,500 in 86,000 Resort shares between

May and October 1992.

In a second writ issued by Edwin Coe last week Invesco Enterprise Trust is demanding damages over the forged prospectus from nine defendants, again including Mr Feld, Coopers and Barclays de Zoete Wedd.

Shareholders have also issued four other writs via solicitors Leon Kaye Collins & Gittens, while debenture holders have issued one via Norton Rose, in an attempt to win compensation in the Resort affair. All the writs share Coopers as one of the various defendants.

Regarding the two writs issued by Edwin Coe, a spokeswoman for Coopers said: "They have not been served, so we cannot comment."

Legal observers expect Resort to produce plenty more litigation before the dust finally settles.

THE Financial Services Authority (FSA) is suing the Co-operative Insurance Society in a wrangle over the regulator's former head office in the City, which it leases from the Co-op.

The FSA, the new super-regulator, has already moved out of Gavrelle House, Bunhill Row,

and further east in London to Canary Wharf in Docklands.

A new tenant for Bunhill Row, the Post Office, is ready to move in. The Co-op and the FSA are now in a commercial dispute over property rights, however, and last week the Post Office requested that the FSA launch a writ against the Co-op.

The FSA has now issued an originating summons seeking a declaration by the court that it has a tenant's right to assign the lease of the Bunhill office without the landlord's (Co-op's) consent.

The regulator wants to assign the Bunhill lease to the Post Office. The FSA's writ, issued through solicitors Allen & Overy last week, concludes: "In the event that the Plaintiff has suffered any loss and damage by reason of the Defendant's conduct damages to be assessed."

THE FSA issued an entirely separate writ last week, through a different law firm, Clifford Chance, and this time purely in its role as a regulator.

On 1 May it started proceedings against a South African-owned investment

company, Paragon Securities, and its three directors - Simon James Parry, Dean Dempsey and Justin Stanley Russell.

The writ alleged breaches of section 47 and 57 of the Financial Services Act 1986, which cover misleading statements and advertising investment services in the UK without authorisation.

The FSA launched its action after Paragon had started to contact potential investors in the UK.

Yesterday, at a hearing before Mr Justice Lightman, Paragon Securities and the directors voluntarily gave undertakings to the Court not in the future to breach sections 47 and 57 of the Act.

Paragon has also indicated to the FSA that it intends to ensure that its future dealings with clients meet the standards required.

Justin Russell has resigned as a director and employee of Paragon Securities with effect from 7 May 1998.

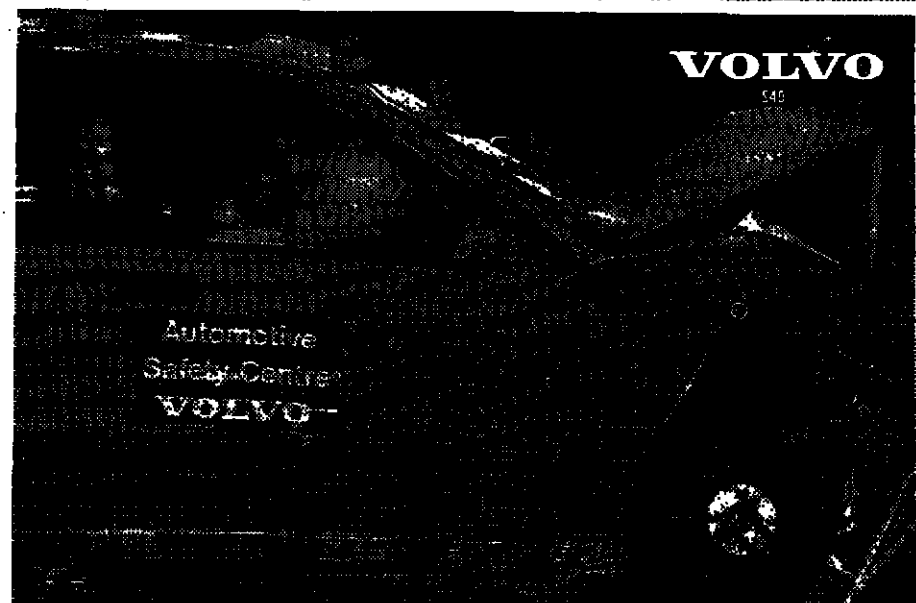
Paragon Securities has agreed to make a contribution to the FSA's costs in the proceedings, and those proceedings have now been stayed.

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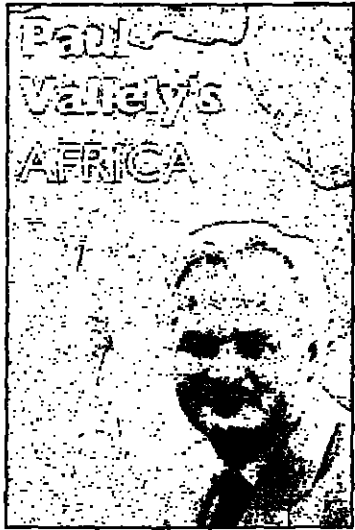
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The people the banks forgot



Zambia: After a decade of economic advance, Africa is sliding back into poverty and people are suffering again. There are no jobs, little food and infant mortality is rising



Helping out: Young girls fetch water in Zambia, where gender typecasting begins early

Photograph: Paul Valley

THE name is written Misisi, but it is pronounced Missus. The land on which the shanty town is built once belonged to an Englishwoman called Mrs Cook. It is now divided into two compounds. The other, naturally enough, is called Kuk.

If there is a comedy to its name, there is precious little to smile at about life in Misisi, one of the poorest suburbs in the Zambian capital Lusaka. The fine dust blows in swirls around your head as you cross the railway line which separates the place from the more prosperous Kabwata estate. Only this is not dust. It is dried human excrement which floods the compound when the pit latrines overflow in the rain. It sinks into the ground and the fierce heat cooks it and powders it for the wind to twist in clouds which clog your eyes and nose and throat.

It is a long way from Birmingham to Lusaka. But the geographical distance is nothing beside the psychological one. In Birmingham, the finance ministers of the most powerful countries in the world gathered yesterday in preparation for the summit of their heads of government next weekend. In Misisi live the people whose future turns on the financiers' dry statistical deliberations.

Their is a netherworld beyond the imaginings of those who have never left the comfort of Africa's holiday highways. It is not the sights, for you have seen them on the television. It is the smell, a combination of baked sweat and urine. It is the sense of intimacy, the nearness of the walls, the tentative touching hands of the curious children and the unwavering gaze of their parents.

This is a world of desperate enterprise. Everywhere by the sides

of the dirt tracks the people of Misisi try to scrape a living by selling to one another. Small boys sell dried caterpillars and locusts from raggy bags on ramshackle tables. Old women sit in the dust with tiny amounts of wild fruits set out like dusty jewels on old cloths. Those with a little capital have bought big bags of sugar or mealie meal which they have sub-divided into the minute packets which is all that can be afforded by people who buy only enough for the next meal, if they can pay for one.

There are no jobs. A handful of the men once worked in the copper belt to the north, but the mines have been shut down in the process of privatisation. With the mines went the housing, the schools and the clinics they provided. Their state equivalents never existed, or have closed under government cuts,

or have had fees introduced which exclude the children of the poor.

This is the new baseline for ordinary people in Africa. For them, life has gone backwards since I was last in Zambia 10 years ago. The story is the same throughout the continent. For one billion people, development is being thrown into reverse. After decades of steady economic advance since colonial times Africa is sliding back into poverty.

The children around me were almost all younger than they looked: almost half of all African children are so malnourished that their growth is stunted. Infant mortality is rising: one in five of the children around me in Misisi now die before the age of five. Last time I was in Zambia the average life expectancy, I recall, was 56. Today it is 42.

School attendance is falling. The story is the same in health. People

buy medicines, if they can, after diagnosing themselves because they cannot afford the clinic fees. I met one man whose child was ill. What was his greatest worry? He paused to think. "That I won't have the money to buy a coffin," he said finally.

What is the cause of all this? It is Third World debt. When individuals go broke we eventually draw a line under the debt and declare them bankrupt. Not so with nations. "Countries never go bust," in the words of Walter Wriston, who once led the banking giant, Citicorp, to become top lender to the Third World in those halcyon days when interest rates were lower than inflation and the poor world was told they would be mugs not to borrow.

But the world economy shifted. And nations which could not go bust

have fallen into an abyss of economic degradation in their attempts to keep paying just the interest on the ever-mounting debt.

The Western world sent in its financial policeman, the International Monetary Fund, to ensure that the poor nations could keep paying. Strict "adjustment" packages were introduced to reorientate Third World economies towards debt repayment. Under structural adjustment programmes (aptly known as SAPs) poor countries have: cut subsidies on the food staples relied on by the poor; taken land from small subsistence farms for large-scale export crops such as mangoes, touts or cut flowers; devalued their currencies, lowering export earnings and increasing import costs; slashed spending on basic education and primary health care; cut jobs and wages for workers in government industries

and services and privatised public industries for sale to foreign investors. "And still the debt is such that every one of these people owes the West \$950 [\$594] each," said the feisty Zambian woman, Mulima Kufekisa, who had taken me into Misisi. She heads up the SAP monitoring project, which the Zambian bishop's conference has established, with funding from the Catholic aid agency Cafod. "So Zambia spends five times as much paying interest on debt as it does on education – and three times as much as we spend on healthcare."

But there is a powerful resilience in Misisi too. It was there, most memorably, in Alice Noalia who each day dons her nurse's uniform to work in a church feeding programme for 185 of the area's most malnourished children and 83 orphans. She works without pay.

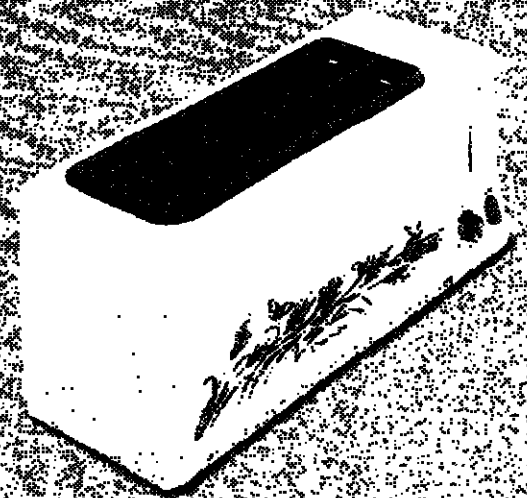
She and her children live off a single bowl of the maize porridge – *nshima* – a day. "Life is hard," she said with devastating understatement. "Five years ago, before the SAP, everything was quite OK. We could afford bread and eggs for breakfast, fish or meat refresh with the *nshima* at lunch, and vegetables for dinner. Now we have none of that, not even a cup of tea before bed."

All this has nothing to do with structural adjustment, Mr Gideon Njoko, the head of the World Bank in Zambia, insisted when I went to see him. It is the result simply of poverty and poor economic management by the Zambian authorities. "Who was paying for her three meals a day before?" he asked. His question was a purely economic one. It seemed, to him, to have no ethical dimension.

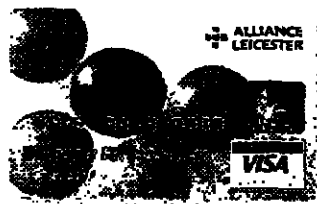
That is why next Saturday tens of thousands of activists – in what is expected to be the biggest Third World action since Live Aid – plan to throw a human chain around the Birmingham conference centre where the G8 leaders will meet. To remind them of the ethics that lurk beneath the economics. I would, I promised Alice, join them.

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TIME OFF

TRAVEL, LEISURE & SPORT

Saturday 9 May 1998



PICTURE OF THE WEEK Soaking up the sun at Syon Park. Monarch and tree nymph butterflies by Tom Pilston. To order a 12x9 print (price £15) call 0171-293 2534.

Week in, week out

William Hartston signs up for the single European song title: 'When Will You Save Your Boom-Bang-a-Dinge-Loo For Me, piep piep?'

It is a little-known fact that if you multiply the number of entrants (25) in today's Eurovision Song Contest by the number of times (four) Norway has scored *nul points*, then add the number of times the contest has been held (43 including today's), and finally subtract the number of UK victories (five), you get exactly the number of times the word "la" occurred in the lyrics of Spain's winning song "La, la, la" in 1968. The other odd thing about the Eurovision Song Contest is that instruments are tuned to A at 442 Hz rather than the usual concert pitch A at 440 Hz. The effect is to make the songs sound a little on the sharp side, perhaps to counteract the flatness of the rest of the event.

Yet for cognoscenti, the attraction lies not in the pitch of the music, but in the timbre of the lyrics. Will anything match the perfect Euro-blandness of past winners "Boom Bang-a-Bang" (1969), "Ding Ding Dong" (1975), "A-Ba-Ni-Bi" (1978), or Sweden's somewhat lavatorial "Diggi Loo-Diggi Ley" (1984)? Will there be anything as potentially meteorological as "Fångad av en stormvind", which brought Sweden another victory in 1991?

There is no doubt that winning titles have become more introspective over the years. After "Save Your Kisses for Me" in 1976 and "Hold Me Now" in 1987, followed closely by "Ne Partez Pas Sans Moi" and "Rock Me

in 1988 and 1989, the depth of true Euro-doubt finally burst through in 1992 with "Why Me?" a question that remains tantalisingly unresolved.

We shall not find the answer this year. Only more questions. The Irish entry asks "Is Always Over Now?" and with eight of the 28 lines in the lyrics ending with question marks, the whole song sounds like something from a specialist round of *Mastermind*: ... answering questions on Romance, your time starts now: How can you say it's over now? How can you wave it all goodbye? Is always over now? Does it never last that long? Were the feelings that I had ever right or was it wrong? You passed on just one question: Why is it that Ireland wins the Eurovision Song Contest so often? And the answer is that everyone who doesn't want England to win always votes for Ireland, and everyone likes voting for smaller nations who sing bouncy songs in English.

The Spanish entry, "What Will I Do Without You", is even more quizzical, with 10 questions in 29 lines, including the tautological "What will I do without you if you're not here any more?" Probably much the same as I'd do without you if you were here any more.

The most surprising aspect of this year's songs is the degree of agreement between nations of the former Yugoslavia. With

Macedonia (which we have to call "Pyrom" to avoid annoying the Greeks) singing "Somebody Stop the Dawn" and Croatia singing "May the Sun Never Rise", it is clear that Eurovision has succeeded where Cyrus Vance and Dr David Owen failed.

Last year was the first time the Eurovision was won by a song with "Love" in the title (though "Amour" had appeared in two win-

True Euro-doubt finally burst through in 1992 with 'Why Me?', a question that remains tantalisingly unresolved

ners in the early days of the competition). Perhaps hoping this is the start of a trend, the entries this time include "When Love Turns to Hate" (Poland), "Love is" (Sweden), "The One that I Love" (Malta) and "Guido Loves You" (Germany), the last of which has the promising refrain "Piep, piep, piep, ich hab' Dich lieb" and promises "schick ich Euch meinen Liebesbeweis, Nussecken und Himbeereis" (I'll send you my

love tokens - nut biscuits and raspberry ice-cream). What more can a woman ask? Gas-tronomically, this should run home a clear winner, but food has rarely attracted the judges, unless you count the 1966 winner, "Merci Chérie".

The Estonian entry "Mere Lapsed" appears at first glance to be the tale of a love that, unlike the Polish one that has turned to hate, has merely lapsed - perhaps the story of a couple forgetting to renew their marriage licence. Yet it turns out that the words of the title are Estonian and mean Children of the Sea. The lyrics tell the story of lovers stealing off in a boat together: "We'll challenge every storm that comes along, united with the power that we belong," according to the translation on the BBC Eurovision website (though, to be fair, it probably makes more sense in Estonian). All the same, lines such as "We'll harness raging winds to lead us on" and "Hiding on the depth of our despair there'll always be a wave that gets us there" suggest that their romance might do better if they first waited for the weather to improve.

The UK entry "Where Are You?" sensibly stays on land in the pursuit of love. It starts "I see a picture in a frame, I see a face without a name, Riding alone on an empty train". She then sings: "I would drive through the rain." Presumably in pursuit of

the train, though unless it's a slow suburban service I wouldn't give her much chance of catching it, and when she goes on, "You could unlock these chains", it sounds as though she'd be much happier on a bicycle anyway. Still, if he didn't even bother to tell her his name, I fear the romance is doomed.

But will anything come close to those record 138 la-la-las in 1968? The only challenge this time comes from the Finnish entry "Aava", of which the BBC's "free translation" begins: "Wide Earth, open the wide Earth, Beauty, greatness, Beauty, greatness, Calm. Wide Earth, open the Wide Earth, Wide Earth open the Wide Earth. Wide." The second verse continues in the same spirit, though there is a "Hummamaa" just before the end. Apparently there are only six different words in the Finnish original, which may be a good thing because we are told that the singer is a Swedish speaker and her Finnish is not all that good.

Taking everything into account, and remembering that nobody ever votes for the eastern Europeans, only countries of the former Austro-Hungarian empire ever vote for anyone singing in German, and no vote from a country that has signed up for the single European currency will vote for the UK, my money's on Ireland. They always win it anyway.



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Sun, sea, sushi and mash

Fi Glover gets off her gently bronzed behind for a spot of forced entertainment in Phuket. Welcome to Club Med, Thai-style

"Participate. Earn your lunch. This is not the Holiday Inn." This is what shrieks out at 12.30pm every day while you are lying on the beautifully arranged sunloungers by the pool at Club Med, Phuket.

It's the clarion call of Greg, a diddy South African geezer with dot-to-dot freckles and an unnerving little grin. The fact that his tan only starts from above his ankles gives away the fact that he's the golf instructor... but unfortunately for him his duties don't end there. Every day he has to stand by the pool with a loud hailer and try to get an international factor of sunbathers - if that is the right collective noun - to get off their gently bronzed backsides and do something in the gently blowing breeze of the Andaman Sea.

I have a problem with organised entertainment, especially if there aren't serious Price is Right five-door saloons up for grabs. And on Day One I definitely did not want my poolside reverie disturbed by lots of people doing the Conga in the pool. I turned the other bikini-clad cheek and put my stuffy little British nose in the air. On Day Two my thought process ran along the lines of "I'm an international traveller who likes to explore strange regions of Bhutan... but... mmmmm this is fun to watch in a patronising kind of way." And you've guessed it: by Day Three I was preparing my dive at the start of the International Club Med Olympics Race alongside Valerie from Nice (I won the silver). I had also fully entered the spirit of the packaged world of Club Mediterra - pioneer of all-inclusive activity holidays in 130 "villages" around the world, in poor financial shape at the moment and guilty of overusing the word participate.

But although you might want to hate it at the start, I bet you a bag full of beads that by the end you're having a good time. And let's get the bead thing sorted right now. Your package at Club Med includes all accommodation, sport, food and drink at meals - if, however you want a drink from the bar you have to buy it with beads. These aren't romantic little cowrie shells collected from the beach at dawn. They are plastic orange and yellow things that you can stick together to make necklaces. I think they are just a careful way of disguising how horrendously expensive the bar is. Get into the Nineties and give me a smart card.

Club Med also has its own language. Greg - as an employee - is a GO and I as a passing guest was a GM. All Gentil Officers have to eat, drink, mingle but not sleep with all Gentil Members - although you do get the feeling some of them may have taken hospitality to horizontal levels. Meals are at certain times, a Sun Dance takes place round the pool in an early Pan's People style at midday every day and you need a secret code to make an international call out of your room. Club Med may be an apt first impression.

We were lucky to be given the tour of the "village" by Grinning Greg who kindly informed us that the elephant ride was a waste of time and that the sports centre was right at the other end of the resort, but since we didn't look like we'd be needing to tee off at 8am or play a quick serve and volley before lunch so he wouldn't bother showing us that. It was a lovely pinch of reality salt on the side of an



Canvas chais longues: there are 130 Club Med villages around the world Photo: Brendan Beirne/Tony Stone Images

all too effusive plate of unpalatable bonhomie from some of the other GOs.

Participation turned out not to be our forte, though. But slobbering out on Kata Beach we were much better at. Kata Beach is that stretch of white sand that you hope Thailand will always have: bobbing long boats; sunsets to die for, all pinky and dusky; and a tarpaulin under which a dozen smiling massage ladies ease away your troubles with tiger balm, baby oil and some vertebrae crunching hand techniques. You can have a massage in the Spa at Club Med but it costs seven times as much and you have to listen to piped music. Which would you rather: the sound of Thai girls giggling at your bumpy European thighs or Michael Bolton classics?

Most of our bumps were caused by the food in Club Med. This reflects the clientele who range from Japanese, through Korean to Italian to French to us. The Harvester help-yourself principle works here and your selection of cuisine ranges from Japanese to Korean to Italian to French... By the end of a week our choices were positively surreal: one tiger prawn, two slices of pizza and a bowl of Thai soup. My favourite was sushi with mashed potato or the ultimate

hangover cure, three types of potato: fried, mashed and roast. So we ate and slept and marvelled at how smooth everyone else's thighs looked for seven days until we had almost lost the power of speech.

On our last night in Phuket we wandered back from Kata town to find something akin to hell being enacted around the pool. It was a funfair complete with greasy pole, coconut shies and roulette tables with fake money. At first we thought that was going a bit far. But everyone else was having such a good time. That's Club Med for you, it just keeps on going. You can help yourself to as much as you like, or just pick and choose and you'll only really hate it if you do turn your nose up at everything... apart from anything else that is a bad way to sunbathe: you'll get a nasty Judith Chalmers turtle neck effect by the end of two weeks.

I would personally recommend doing three things before going though - make your own bar beads out of melted plastic, rent my mate Cath out for her late night cabaret action which she performed to tumultuous applause after the funfair had packed up and gone - and check that Greg is still there before you go. Do try that mashed potato and sushi combination. You know you want to.

Corners of the planet that are forever France

If it's Club Med, it must be French - and a paradise for children. David Bowen investigates

Club Med is another country. France, to be precise. I have been to one in Italy and one in Ibiza, and my in-laws have been to Club Meds in Morocco, Turkey and Sicily. They are all in France.

Nearly all the staff above cleaning level are French, and their knowledge of other languages is rarely good. The local doctor in Ibiza, fluent in English, German and, of course, Spanish, was baffled that one of the biggest complexes on the strip was inhabited by people with whom he could not communicate. But that's the French for you. When they go on holiday, they take their cities with them. I can't quite understand why they like it (I prefer abroad to be foreign), but if you want to go to France and you are not bothered what country it is in, Club Med has its advantages.

The food, for one. French chefs, French food - all free, or at least included in the package price. Wander through the heaving buffets at lunch time, or tunnel your way through infinite variety in the evening. Tough. Unfortunately the wine is not French - it is whatever local plonk has been shipped in. My party laid no claim to subtle palates, but even we were surprised when a blind tasting in Ibiza revealed that none of us could distinguish between the red, the white and the rosé.

Then there is the unpressured atmosphere. Club Med is, in essence, an upmarket holiday camp, with plenty of games and entertainments if you want to join in. But you don't have to, and no one (except perhaps the camp joker) will bother you if you want to grill gently in the sun and read pulp fiction. You can find yourself so seduced by the atmosphere that cynicism can turn into tolerance and even enthusiasm. Many hard-nosed holiday-makers have ended up joining in the end-of-evening knees-up. Embarrassing, but true.

Some of the Club Meds are attractive. In 1996 we stayed in Metaponto, on the instep of Italy. Its residential village is draped delightfully in bougainvillea, and the restaurant is a strikingly original wooden structure (though not, as we discovered during a rainstorm, a waterproof one). The almost-all-in pricing will appeal to many. Prices look high (close to £900 a week in August at Metaponto) but you can sleep, eat, drink (wine at least), sail, canoe, go to the gym, play golf and tennis etc without spending a penny extra. It's only if you want a drink from the bar that you should take care: Club Med's answer to the euro, the red, green and yellow coupon, is not recommended for those with budgetary restraints.

But the main reason my extended family has descended serially on Club Meds is that many of them are geared for children. The ones we chose all had Mini Clubs - for five-year-olds up - and some had

Baby Clubs, starting at either two years or four months.

When the child clubs work, they work brilliantly. My wife's nephew and niece, aged 10 and eight, ended up as stars on the full-size circus trapeze at Metaponto (we all tried it - it's terrifying). To them, the Mini Club was heaven on earth.

But, and this is where my enthusiasm starts to falter, some of the children's facilities were not good. At Ibiza last summer the same kids were unimpressed by the Mini Club. The Baby Clubs were a real problem, though often more for parents than for children. Most of the Gentils Organisations (GOs) who ran them were indeed kind, but they were also young (mostly students) with no training in looking after children marked at being dumped by their parents, the Gentils Membres (GMs).

The GOs, for their part, frequently found intolerable the guilt of leaving a child screaming to go and sit by a pool with Dick Francis. They knew the screaming rarely lasted for more than a minute or two, but for many the anxiety was difficult to bear. They did not feel *gentils*, and the time the child spent in the Baby Club often reduced throughout the holiday - sometimes to nothing.

The lack of training among the GOs is one reason why Club Med has had so much stick recently. It is, in fact, a symptom of the real problem - a failure to be consistent. Variety is good; varying standards are not.

When the French go on holiday, they take their cities with them

And Club Med finds it difficult to be consistent partly because the clubs themselves are so different. Whereas Metaponto was spacious, quiet and attractive, Ibiza was noisy and somewhat cramped: until a few years ago it was an ordinary hotel on the main strip, and it showed. My in-laws tell me that Metaponto was outpaced by Palmiye in Turkey, with Kamarina on Sicily also scoring well. Ibiza failed to do much for the brand.

The way to counter this inconsistency is to carry out research beforehand. It is possible to have a wonderful holiday at Club Med and to come back relaxed and slightly plump - with your children in a similar state, having spent much of the time away from you. But only if you go to the right place. You can choose what you want from the brochure: children's facilities, gym, circus school, multimedia workshop (whatever that is). But it is worth sniffing around for recommendations, or lack of them. Many Britons have visited a Club Med, so don't book without asking around.

ALL YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ALL-INCLUSIVES

Single European Currency? Forget it. With an all-inclusive holiday, you don't need a single penny, peseta or pfennig. Club Med (0171-581 161) has no monopoly on the cashless holiday - which is partly why the company has had fairly dismal financial results recently. As the mass-market operators have moved in, four times as many of us take all-inclusive holidays than in 1995.

All-inclusives let you budget more accurately; a zealous bargain-seeker could probably survive a fortnight without spending a bean (or a bead). But they are inevitably divisive: fences must be built to prevent the beer and buffet falling into the wrong hands. There is a financial disincentive to escape and see the world beyond the swimming pool. All-pervasive all-

inclusives commoditise travel, reducing it to an arbitrary sun, sea and sangria sin final experience. Check out the all-inclusive brochures issued by Air Tours, Cosmos, First Choice, Thomson and Sunworld. If your travel agent seems inordinately keen to book you one, it could be because he or she earns 10 per cent on everything you eat and drink. One brochure you won't find at the

travel agent is the one issued by Club Mark Warner (0171-761 7000), a direct-sell operator which has specialised in high-quality all-inclusive holidays in the Mediterranean for much longer than the mass-market operators. The other all-inclusive location that I have particularly enjoyed is the original: Budlin's (0990 01010). Simon Calder

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SIMON CALDER

What is the collective noun for a group of female television presenters travelling together? A network? An overbooking? A lottery? Whatever, several of our most notable TV personalities spent an unhappy Bank Holiday Monday evening at Nice airport, when they'd much rather have been in Luton.

They were among more than 100 holiday-makers waiting for a delayed EasyJet flight home from the south of France, which finally arrived five hours late in the early hours of Tuesday morning.

In common with other airlines, EasyJet has no legal obligation to make financial amends if a flight is delayed for technical reasons. But if the experience of Independent readers Sheila and Cliff Chatten or Reading is anything to go by, the unfortunate passengers should at least get their money back.

"We were booked to fly to Barcelona on Thursday evening. The motorway traffic had been appalling, the weather ghastly, and, on reaching Luton, we weren't too pleased to

hear that our 7.47 [the time, not the make] flight had been 'indefinitely delayed'." Apparently the plane had been taken out of service for repairs after being struck by lightning. (To digress for a moment: my colleague Harriet O'Brien swears that on her recent fear-of-flying course she was assured that planes could not be struck by lightning, due to the absence of an electrical earth; comments, please.)

The Chattens continue: "We sat around to wait, eating and drinking courtesy of a £3.50 voucher per passenger. Our flight eventually took off about 20 past midnight: the captain was charmingly apologetic about the delay and the drinks on board were free. An inconvenience, certainly, but not a catastrophe."

"When an unsolicited letter arrived from EasyJet some two weeks later, we imagined the contents before opening it: a half-price offer on some future flight, maybe, to tempt us back to the airline? No, better than that..."

The letter the Chattens received was from Stelios Haji-Ioannou, EasyJet's chairman, promising a full refund: "Since we have failed to deliver on our basic promise of providing reliable transport to you at the best possible price, I feel it is inappropriate that we keep your fare for the above flight."

should resound with terms such as "style" and "panache". Not, however, in third class.

When George Orwell made his journey to the French capital in *Down and Out in Paris and London*, he sailed third class from Tilbury to Dunkirk. The modern equivalent can be found on the newly launched three-class system on Air France flights between Heathrow and Paris.

Many airlines use a three-class system on long-haul flights; Eva Air has four, on trips to Taiwan. But on a

Certainly anyone stumping up £420.40 for a round-trip business ticket deserves all the free champagne they can wolf down in half-an-hour

30-minute journey it seems needlessly elaborate.

It works like this: Passengers are segregated by fare paid, with business class at the front and "full-fare economy" in the middle. We discount travellers are crammed in at the back. Outbound, the promised "breakfast" turns out to be a stale croissant; inbound, the forbidden champagne is wheeled scornfully past third class, and anyone

with the temerity to ask for some is offered a can of warm lager instead.

Air France says the arrangement reflects fairly the amount each passenger has paid for a seat, and certainly anyone stumping up £420.40 for a round-trip business ticket deserves all the free champagne he or she can wolf down in half-an-hour. Meanwhile, until the Tilbury to Dunkirk ferry service starts up again, I'll be the one with a packed lunch on Eurostar.

Sue Sutton writes from Singapore about "the mysterious disappearance of the drinks trolley on Singapore Airlines' flights to and from London - instead they bring round a tray of orange juice, beer and fizzy wine. Other drinks can be ordered, but arrive only after a considerable delay and consist of a thimbleful of your chosen tipple. Obtaining wine with the meal is similarly complicated."

Dr Sutton asked the airline why the policy had been adopted: "I was told it was 'speedier'. On a 13-hour flight, I wouldn't have thought time a big consideration!"

"While understanding that there have been some problems with drunken passengers harassing the 'Singapore girls', and certainly not advocating mass drunkenness on long-haul flights, I am surprised that an airline with such a reputation for excellent service and one that is, in many ways, way ahead of its competitors on this route, has fallen down to the level of a basic charter company."

كلنا من الامل



Midwest medley: sunset on Lake Michigan, left; Old Mission Lighthouse, below

Photographs: Robert Harding Picture Library

Great Lakes ... and the beaches aren't bad

Rolling surf, deep forests ... You name it, Michigan's got it. Donald Hiscock is smitten by the mitten-shaped state

"If you look at my little finger, just by the nail, that's where I come from. Over here, that's kind of where we are right now," said the friendly waitress at Don's Drive In, a pink-and-blue recreation of a Fifties' restaurant. It looked like the one where Fred Flintstone orders the brontosaurus burger that's so big it capsizes his car. Don's is situated on Grand Traverse Bay, next to Pirate's Cove mini-golf and in a perfect situation for spectacular sunsets. Our waitress for the evening was happy to locate us in that time-honoured way that people from Michigan have, by holding out their hand and pointing confidently to a knuckle or a crease or a mole. It's a quaint global positioning device: Michigan is famous for being shaped like a mitten.

We spent a summer family holiday up in the north-west corner of that mitten in Traverse City, the cherry-growing capital, as it is known - even if the volume production is now out west. We loll around Lake Michigan, revelling in a state more famous to us in Britain for cars, Kellogg's Corn Flakes and our tendency to mispronounce it Mitch-igan. In the past I had dismissed Michigan as being synonymous with crime and industry, but it's home to the real Midwest.

Michigan may be bordered by Great Lakes, but there is also an abundance of far smaller lakes, with beaches and forests.

My family and I don't dream of revisiting Traverse City for the cherry products, or the enormous burgers and cholesterol-inducing milk shakes; we want to get back to the rolling surf and white, sandy beaches. Our favourite trick back in England is to put photos of beaches down on the table when after-dinner conversation turns to foreign travel. "Where do you think that is?" we ask. "Barbados? The Algarve?" they guess. Most are bowled over when we tell them. We do the hand held up like a mitten bit after that.

Front Street, Traverse City is the main thoroughfare. On Friday evenings in summer they close it to traffic, and the shopkeepers open stalls on the street. The Downtown area becomes a mini-carnival site with musicians, country dancers and low-key street entertainers.

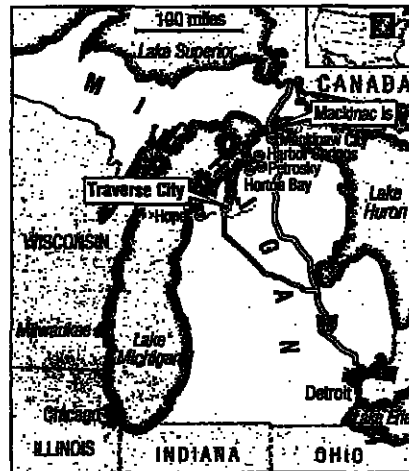
Here the deputy sheriff, leaning against his long white Chevrolet, talked to us about England, where his sister lives in Godalming. "Have you heard of Godalming?" he asked. He was tickled pink to be told that we'd been there. He, like most other friendly folk in Northern Michigan, liked to hear our accent. "Thanks for visiting with us," they say. When you're done talking they thank you for the conversation.

The city was founded by lumber barons last century, whose grand mansions are still to be seen on Sixth Street. The Boardman



river, once used to transport timber, curls slowly through the historic heart of Downtown. Boys fish from wooden decking below the grand Carnegie Library building. Traverse City is not remote from the rest of the state, but when we drove through forest on quiet roads one afternoon it certainly felt like frontier country.

One hot day we went out to the Platte river, near a town called Honor, after calling in at Bud's Party Store to buy beer, soda and chips. Like the Michiganders around us we stripped off and pushed out two



rented aluminium canoes and let the gentle current take us downstream. It didn't take long to get used to paddling in a straight line; the difficult bit was negotiating families sitting inside rented inner tubes drifting slowly in front of us. We felt conspicuously British as we asked them to move out of the way. "Excuse me, please." "Are you British?" some shouted back, waving a friendly beer can as if in a toast to international accord.

It was a cooler day when we visited the Sleeping Bear Dune National Lakeshore,

to the north of Traverse City on the Leelanau peninsula. We joined other families trudging up the seriously high dune that rises to more than 400ft, only to find yet more sand stretching out in front of us. And, yes, the reserved English tourists couldn't help themselves and joined in the fun of rolling all the way down again, laughing, screaming and getting a mouthful of grit. "Way to go, man!"

Our favourite beach was on the narrow, 17-mile peninsula that pokes out north from Traverse City. This is an area of comfortable homes that are beginning to use up the land once occupied by acres of cherry orchards. At the tip of the peninsula is Old Mission Lighthouse, set right on the 45th parallel, level with Bordeaux; hence the proliferation of vines in the area. Cherry-flavoured wine, anyone? Of course, we'd come not for the wine but for the beach at the state park next to the lighthouse. The sand shelves so gently, you can walk out through smooth rocks in clear water for about 100 yards. We were there one evening and watched an awesome ball of red sun sink into the lake. But after the pleasure came the pain, as the bugs began to bite.

For all that, one of the simplest and best moments of a holiday up in Michigan is when you sit out at night and look at the stars. We were staying out of town

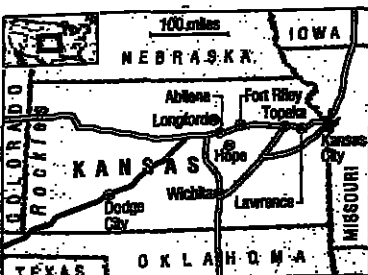
where there was little street lighting. The sky was blacker than we had ever seen it, and we gazed at the Milky Way and constellations that we hadn't realised were there all the time.

It's corny, I know, but after the children had gone to sleep on the last night of our stay, we couldn't help but make a wish out loud when a shooting star blazed across the heavens, distracting us from the soporific sounds of the waves lapping the lakeshore just a few yards away. We wished that we could return soon - every summer would be just fine - back to that place I can point to quickly in the palm of my hand, thanks to Lindy at Don's Drive In.

Detroit is served daily from Heathrow by British Airways, and from Gatwick by North-west. Alternatively, nearby Chicago has flights from Heathrow (Air India, American Airlines, BA and United), Birmingham, Glasgow and Manchester (all American Airlines). Fares in high summer are likely to be pricey, but until mid-June expect to pay about £300 return through discount agents.

Discount travel agents may rent you a car for less than the hire companies offer direct; you should find an economy car for about £30 per day, fully inclusive. If you prefer not to rent a car, the air pass offered by Southwest (01293 596677) is excellent value.

Land of wheat and rodeos



"One Kansas farmer feeds 101 people - and you," declared a sign on the state's main road, Interstate-70. And if you're looking for a holiday destination that combines cowboys and history with giga-bushels of wheat, there's no place like Kansas. Kansas City, a farmer told me, "is the breadbasket of our nation, ma'am".

As you drive west on I-70 through the Flint Hills, a spectacular landscape of rolling hills, wooded river valleys and tall-grass prairie stretches to the horizon. From the interstate road, cowboys can be seen moving their herds across this quintessential American countryside. And south of I-70 is the Homestead Ranch - a women-only cattle ranch. If you fancy yourself as a hard-riding wranglerette, you can brand, rope and herd here.

Pioneers streamed across Kansas in

Come to Kansas if you yearn for the romance of the rodeo, a glimpse into frontier days and a chance to see Ike Eisenhower's childhood home. Anne Perret was there

the mid-19th century on the Oregon, Santa Fe and California Trails. Near Topeka, there are antique ruts gouged into the prairie by wagon wheels. Fifty miles farther west stands Fort Riley, built to protect "pilgrims" on the Oregon Trail from marauding Indians. Now it is one of the US Army's most important bases. It also offers the excellent US Cavalry Museum, a buffalo herd and Quarters 24 (better known as the Custer House) which provides a glimpse of the romance and trials of military life after the Civil War. George Armstrong Custer commanded Fort Riley, before riding away to the Battle of Little Big Horn.

Off the interstate road are towns such as Industry, Cottonwood Falls and Enterprise, with streets lined with reminders of frontier days - hitching posts, jailhouses and old false-fronted stores. At Longford, the sign on Slim's Place reads "Hamburgers & Ammunition". These are tiny communities, and their young people are leaving for the cities. At Hope - on a seat bearing the town's name - someone has added "less" in black paint.

We stayed in Abilene, featured in a

corralful of Westerns. Once it was a wild cowtown, the terminus of the Chisholm Trail. Cowboys drove millions of long-horns up from Texas, to be shipped by rail to Chicago. Even now, immense, moaning Santa Fe trains rumble through the "dee-po".

A whiff of gunslinger lingers in Abilene. In the 1860s it was a gaudy mix of gambling halls, brothels and saloons. The town hired Wild Bill Hickok to impose law and order, but one night he killed a drunken gambler in a gunfight before accidentally gunning down his own deputy. The townspeople were aghast - a lawman who couldn't tell the good guy from the bad guy was a danger to everyone. They got him out of town fast.

In "Old Abilene Town", original structures stand beside replicas. In summer there are strutting saloon girls, fast-draw competitions and a cowboy encampment where cowboy poet Jack Dewey draws stories about spooked herds and round-ups. Rodeos are held all over Kansas; the best is probably Abilene's Wild Bill Hickok rodeo, which opens with a parade. It is part of a week-long county fair, a showcase

for quilting, canning, horseshoe-tossing and, inevitably, wheat. It's a chance to mingle with folks wearing cowboy boots, big belt buckles and Stetsons, and load up with calorie-busting fair food: corn dogs, hog wings, funnel cakes and root beer floats.

Abilene has two historic homes open to visitors. The Seelye Mansion was built by a patent medicine manufacturer enriched by Wassa-Tusa, "health restorer for man, stock and poultry". Dr Seelye and his spinster daughters had one house rule: never throw anything away. The result is a time capsule of Midwest turn-of-the-century ephemera.

President Dwight Eisenhower's boyhood home is nothing fancy - a simple house on the wrong side of the tracks. His mother was proud of her small parlour: its dime-store vases, the patchwork cushions she embroidered with her seven sons' names, and her books. Beyond her net curtains is something that made her prouder still - her son Dwight's presidential library. House and library are part of the Eisenhower Center. There's an Ike statue

- a typical pose in uniform, hands on hips. There's a museum stuffed with memorabilia: the "lucky coins" Ike carried throughout the Second World War; "I Like Ike" presidential campaign buttons; and Mamie's hats - feathered, beaded and fringed-like. Ike and Mamie are buried here.

Leaving Abilene, you may go west to Dodge City and the Rockies, but we went east, to Lawrence, an attractive town that's home to the University of Kansas. Lawrence was founded by New England abolitionists. In the 1850s it was an underground railroad stop, an improvised route for runaway slaves escaping to freedom in Canada. In Old West Lawrence, you can take a self-guided tour of the sites where townspeople courageously clothed, fed and hid these black Americans.

Fascinating stuff, and you'll have the place pretty much to yourself. Kansas, after all, isn't famed as a tourist magnet. But I'll be going back - if only to see the monument to its farmers. America's agricultural hall of fame is in Bonner Springs: sodbuster ploughs, barbed wire - and endless varieties of wheat.

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The north Norfolk coast offers varied views, rare bird life – and an English stately home. **Emma Haughton** takes a walk

This four-mile walk around Holkham, in north Norfolk, offers impressive contrasts in scenery. At one moment you'll be strolling along some of the wildest and most beautiful stretches of beach in the land, then, just minutes later, you'll find yourself walking through the genteel, landscaped grounds of one of England's most impressive stately homes.

Kicking off from the Victoria hotel in the centre of Holkham village, cross over the A149 into Lady Ann's Road, a tree-lined avenue leading past cattle and beet fields directly to the sea.

At the end of the road, turn left on to the earth track through the pines; you're now in the thick of Holkham National Nature Reserve, which covers nearly 4,000 hectares of Norfolk coast between Burnham Norton and Blakeney. The sandy beaches, inter-tidal mudflats and pine woodland that make up the reserve are a haven for a large variety of birds, many with romantic-sounding names such as redshank, bearded reedling, water rail, shelduck and pied flycatcher.

Once you have passed a small lake on your left, take a sharp right up the steep bank of sand dunes and head down towards the sea. Keep your eyes peeled, and you may even see the rare natterjack toad – distinguished by the light yellow stripe down its back – which lives on the dunes and lays its spawn in the nearby shallow pools.

Bear left as you walk along the foreshore. In rough weather Holkham beach has an invigorating, elemental wildness that is guaranteed to blow the cobwebs from your soul; on fine days it transforms itself into the archetypal English beach, with yachts sailing in the bay, paddling children, and endless yellow sand encrusted with sea shells of every size and shape. At low tide the waves

dawdle along in lazy ripples, and the water remains so shallow that you can paddle for miles before it even reaches your knees.

Following the line of pines on your left, keep on past the first headland. As you turn the corner, brace yourself for the naturist section, but don't get too excited – just as things get interesting, you cut sharp left into the dunes back towards the pine forest, along the path where a sign politely requests nudists to keep to the beach. The sandy track takes you through the eerie gloom of pine



Lost in the Wash: riders on the beach at Holkham, Norfolk

Photograph: John Voos

Coke monument, an elaborate, 120-ft tribute to Thomas Coke, who inherited the estate in 1776 and was regarded as virtually the patron saint of Norfolk farming. The monument was erected by public subscription: the life-size sculptures of a plough, a sheep, an ox and a seed drill that surround the central column (topped by bulls, leaves and turnips) refer to the revolutionary agricultural reforms Coke introduced in the early 19th century.

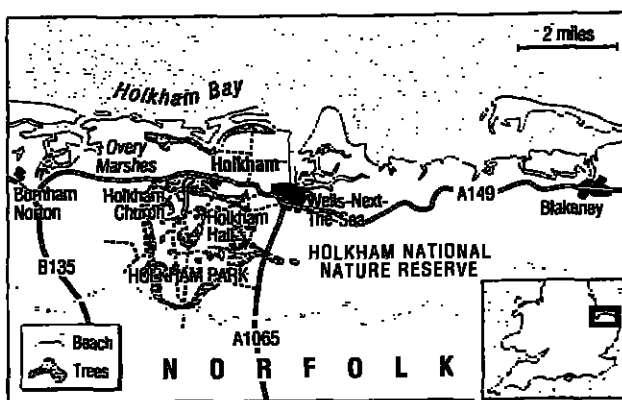
From the monument, head straight across the deer and sheep pastures to Holkham Hall, spread before you in all its magisterial splendour. If you've got the time and the energy, you can take a tour inside and round it off with a meal or a snack in the adjacent tea rooms; if you haven't, content yourself with the magnificent Palladian exterior of this historic 18th-century building, home to seven generations of the Earls of Leicester.

When you've had your fill of all this stateliness, bear north towards the Almshouses Gate. Once over the cattle grid, take the left fork and head towards the trees. From the almshouses it's a short, straight walk down through the model village of Holkham, and back to the Victoria Hotel. If you're peckish, try its wide selection of sandwiches, ploughmen's lunches and hot meals, which you can wash down with a pint of Adnam's beer or Adlestone's cider.

Map: Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 819
TF 84/94 (Wells-next-the-Sea and
Burnham Market)

English Nature, which manages the nature reserve in conjunction with the Holkham estate, requests that visitors do not attempt this particular walk between November and March, when they risk disturbing the rare birds wintering in the marshes alongside Bone's Drove.

Wild geese and philanthropy



woods, home to countless grey squirrels that strip the cones and leave their remains on the forest floor.

When you come to a crossroads, keep heading south along the footpath, past the bird hide on your left. As you curve round into Bone's Drove, look just above the tree line and you'll see the tower of Holkham church and the tip of the Coke monument in Holkham Park, looking, from this distance, uncannily like a pineapple balanced atop an Apollo rocket.

you'll pass through Overy Marshes, in winter an important refuge for wildfowl such as pink-footed geese, brent geese and wigeon.

When you reach the A149 again, cross over and enter Holkham Park through the wrought-iron gates of Church Lodge. Turn almost immediately left through the mature oaks and chestnuts of Church Wood, skirt the tip of the large green lake on your right and head on into Staithe Wood. When you hit a junction, turn sharp right and you'll soon find yourself confronted by

Map: Ordnance Survey Pathfinder 819
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Nature's way with animals

How do you apply homeopathic remedies to a cow with toothache? Or a gerbil that's off its nuts? Sally Williams meets a vet with a mission

People say unpleasant things about the country vet Chris Day: that he is a witch doctor, a bone shaker, a crank. They pick fights with him in veterinary journals. Some even demand that he resign from the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons.

But then Chris Day - mid-fifties, grey, boyishly floppy hair, tweed jacket, comfy cords and peculiar, Muttley-style laugh - is a homeopathic vet. Domestic cats, dogs, gerbils, farm cows, horses, pigs, even zoo elephants, rhinos and wild animals found sick or injured are all treated from his Alternative Veterinary Medicine Centre in Oxfordshire. "There is no animal," he says defiantly, "that can't be treated with alternative medicine."

But how, exactly? There's more to homeopathic medicine than little pills with long names (*Caulophyllum thalictroides*, *Gelsemium sempervirens*); it's about getting to know the whole person as an individual - assessing personality, behaviour, job satisfaction, fingernails. How on earth do you return mind, body and spirit to a balanced state when your patient refuses to be examined (Chris never knocks them out with tranquillisers), let alone discuss its social background and psychological state?

"No, you can't ask the animal questions," agrees Chris, "or even discuss what sort of pain it's in. Does it ache or throb, or is it a shooting pain? But animals have a brain. They feel things. They have emotions." They also get eaten for dinner, but Chris doesn't see this as a reason not to treat them as "energetic wholes" before doing so. "We have a duty to animals, especially if we are exploiting them."

Can you tell whether a dog is happy or sad? "Of course," he replies. "A wet nose,

a waggy tail and a nice shiny coat make a picture of health. So anything short of that starts to become important." But isn't that a healthy dog, rather than a happy one? "Happiness and health are integrated. Mind and body are integrated. That's the fundamental thing." What about cows? "One is happy to chew the cud; another will try to break out. Same situation, different animal. I wouldn't treat mastitis in one the way I would in the other."

Hedgehogs, then? "Wild animals are more of a challenge, but just because you don't know how a hedgehog feels, doesn't mean you can't observe its behaviour and reactions."

A conventional consultation lasts around five minutes. Chris's run to three-quarters of an hour, and that's after Caroline, his PA, has booked them in. It's not just a case of name and address. "You get the whole spiel," she explains. "A blow-by-blow account of the animal's history, like it or not."

Chris spends two days in the surgery and three on the road. He treats referrals only, and as most clients live some distance away, Chris will see them once and then deal with them by phone or letter. Animals are treated with the same homeopathic medicine as humans. Likewise acupuncture treatment, which is used on domestic animals - dogs, cats, horses, even goats and cattle. "Acupuncture treats the animal as an energetic whole," Chris comments.

So how does he set about assessing his patients? Take Smokey the cat, a former stray who has the feline form of Aids. The traditional vet advises that he should be put down. Chris has other thoughts. "Does Smokey like to be warm or cool?" he asks.

"Warm. He spends his whole time near the radiator," says his owner, Charlotte. "Good appetite?" "I'll say. Just look at him." "Stool or waterworks?" "Haven't a clue. He does it outside." "Does he have any fears?" "He jumps when I make a bang or move suddenly." "What sort of bowl does he drink from?" "Best Wedgwood china, of course." Charlotte knows that plastic bowls are full of nasty toxins. "What do you feed him?" "Felix and fresh fish." Whoops! Fish from the North Sea, the Irish Sea, the Mediterranean and fish farms are subject to worrying levels of toxins. Farmed fish suffer the additional disadvantage of being stressed. And really, Chris reminds her, what about the recommended organic chicken regime? But she's tried that. The cat didn't like it. And it's expensive.

Chris, of course, would never be so half-hearted. He is a total believer in 100 per cent

Soil Association-approved feeding, and utterly convinced that he is always right. He lives and works with uninterrupted energy from home, a beautiful Norman barn with Queen Anne extensions, grows medicinal herbs in his walled organic vegetable garden, from which he steams carrots and finely grates herbs for his dog (or so he says in his snappily entitled booklet, *Feeding Dogs the Natural Way*) and is so convinced of the evils of conventional medicine that he even refuses to give his baby daughter "immune-system-disturbing" inoculations.

And one little inconsistency that did not quite compute - eating meat - has now been sorted out. Not that Chris had a problem with eating meat as such. "It's part of life." It's just that one day he couldn't pull the trigger. He used to kill the beast himself, you see, rather than buying it pre-packed from Tesco. And then one day he couldn't. Nor

could his wife, and he wasn't going to pay someone else to do it, if he couldn't. So now he feels much more comfortable with himself. "You have to be consistent," he explains, "otherwise there is a stress."

Or rather, more stress. Making money the natural way is not easy. It costs Chris £700 a day to run the surgery (car, six staff) and, as Caroline points out, "we do not sell products, as conventional vets do. The cost of medicine is nothing. It's the time. And people are never keen to pay for time."

But enough of them do. Chris first set up the practice in 1987 and regularly starts at 4am to catch up on cases. Both his parents were vets and Chris decided, aged five, that he wanted to be one too. He was introduced to homeopathy in his teens by relations who were homeopathic doctors. He trained as a conventional vet (as all homeopathic vets have to) joined his

parents' practice in 1973 and started using homeopathy. It all "snowballed" from there.

He is now secretary of the British Association of Homeopathic Veterinary Surgeons - core qualified membership 19 (and one of those works in South Africa). There are 250 qualified homeopathic doctors. But this could change. There is talk of introducing accredited courses at Bristol University and Glasgow University.

In the meantime there is just one course in Oxford, and the students who will graduate this summer. If they pass a further exam, the numbers of qualified homeopathic vets, Caroline predicts, could be up by at least two.

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There's more to medicine than meets the eye: 'Acupuncture treats animals as an energetic whole,' says vet Chris Day

Photograph: John Lawrence

A sting in the tale of the crayfish

When thousands of crayfish were found dead in the river Avon, sheep dip was immediately suspected. By Duff Hart-Davis

Early on the morning of Thursday, 17 April, Alan Jones went down, as he always does, to inspect the river Avon where it runs past his cottage in the village of Pinkney, Gloucestershire. To his consternation, he saw that the bottom of the stream was covered with dead and dying crayfish; many were upside down, and those still the right way up were barely moving.

Alan - a carpenter and lecturer in construction techniques - has lived there, and fancied the crayfish, for most of his life. Indeed, when he was a boy his family frequently ate them; but since they became a protected species he has been an observer only. It was immediately clear to him that some ecological disaster had taken place, for until then the Sherston Avon had been one of the few remaining habitats in which native crayfish



Under threat: the English crayfish

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

survive. He therefore rang the Environment Agency's emergency line, and within 15 minutes an expert arrived.

At first biologists feared that the mortality was due to the plague imported by American crayfish early in the Eighties - a fungal disease, carried by spores, against which the English species has no resistance. So deadly is it that when it got into the Hampshire Avon it killed the entire population - millions - in the space of two weeks.

Plague, however, was ruled out by analysis of bodies recovered from the river near

Sherston, which showed that the killer agent had been the insecticide cypermethrin, used in sheep dips and sprays. Today, nearly a month after the incident, the hunt is still on for the source of the poison, which has wiped out not only the crayfish but also most other invertebrates along at least three miles of the waterway.

Initial suspicion fell on recently-dipped sheep upstream at Badminton, where drainage ditches - known as winter-born streams - wind through lush watermeadows and run into

the river. The chemicals used in dips are so toxic that even if a sheep merely strays, or falls into the water, it can wipe out all invertebrate life for 100 yards or more. In the past few days, however, the agency's investigating officers have been concentrating on other possibilities.

Compared with the catastrophe of the burst dam in the Coto Donana, this is a disaster in miniature. Nevertheless, it is intensely disappointing for British conservationists, because an enormous effort has gone into preserving the integrity

of the Sherston Avon, and several batches of healthy crayfish have been taken from there to restock less fortunate stretches of the river.

Not that all the work has pleased local people; many have objected to the fences recently built along the river to preserve the banks and keep farm animals out of the stream. Wooden posts and barbed wire, they say, spoil the appearance of the gentle valley. Perhaps they do - but they also prevent encroachment by cattle, reduce erosion and improve the habitat for many river creatures, not least crayfish and water voles. Feelings about the fences run so high that hints have been dropped about possible sabotage; could someone have deliberately dumped something in the river to settle scores with the agency?

That seems pretty far-fetched. Yet certain it is that the people who began bringing crayfish in from America have a lot to answer for, because the importations produced a classic illustration of the folly of introducing alien species into an environment that lacks the controls and balances to keep them in check. Like the grey squirrel, the mink and the rainbow trout, the American crayfish is by no means a welcome immigrant. Being

larger than our own, more aggressive, and omnivorous, it has spread relentlessly through our river systems, eradicated the natives by eating them, driving them off their own territory, and giving them a fatal disease.

At one stage signals were widely advertised as a fine commercial proposition. Anyone who owned a pond was invited to farm them: seed the pond with nippers, you were told, and in a couple of years, at no further cost, you could haul out lobsters. What nobody realised was that signals are amphibious; on wet nights they take to the fields and crawl overland into streams. So they invaded our rivers, with disastrous effect.

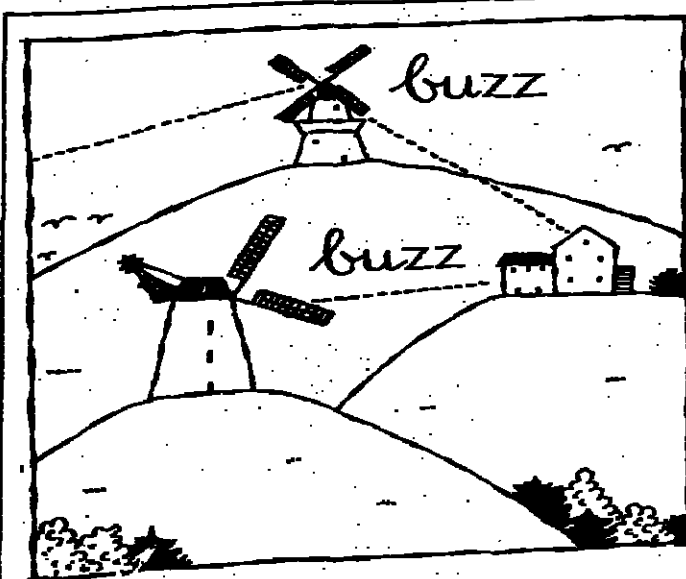
Some of them are resistant

to the plague, and may survive indefinitely. Why, then, should they not eventually replace our native stocks? "Because our freshwater fauna have evolved over thousands of years, since the last ice age, to live in harmony with each other," says Dr Nick Giles, a freshwater fisheries consultant. "Nobody knows whether, in the long run, signals will fit in." As a black mark against them he cites their habit of clipping off weed near the bed of the stream - something English crayfish do not do - and so clearing whole patches of habitat.

No one is yet sure what the long-term effects of the pollution at Sherston may be.

Alan Jones noticed that the brown trout, which he feeds every morning, showed no interest in his offerings for the next three days. Then they appeared to recover their appetites - but what is going to happen to their offspring? The insecticide also wiped out mayfly larvae: Martin Frayling, the agency officer first on the scene, saw "hundreds of thousands of them dead on the river bed". The main food supply for trout fry and other small fish has gone.

Whatever the outcome, all river managers remain acutely aware that farmers are regularly using substances so poisonous that even extremely low concentrations are lethal.



What, when, where ...

The airwaves will be buzzing on 10 May, which is National Mills Day. On Sunday, the Furness amateur radio society will operate a special CB radio event from its headquarters in Gleaston Mill, an 18th-century water mill whose origins were in the Middle Ages.

There are about 400 wind and water mills open to the public in the UK, more than 60 of which are in working order. The special event radio station (call sign GB2GW) will make links with 80 to 90 mills both here and abroad.

Last year mills from The Netherlands, the Republic of Ireland and South Africa

took part. If you're not a CB fan, you can watch the Furness clog dancers, and take in a converted cowedshed, and view an archaeological dig (Mesolithic), as well as examining the clasp-arm pit wheel, the largest in the country, as you watch Gleaston Mill in action.

Gleaston Water Mill, Gleaston, near Ulverston, Cumbria (01229 869244, <http://www.watermill.co.uk>), is open 10am-5pm, admission to mill £1.50 (accompanied children free on Mills Day)

Sally Kindberg

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Suburban savannah

After a trip to South America, Anna Pavord plans to bring a touch of paradise to a very English garden



Rich mix: lemon grass (*Cymbopogon citratus*), left; and tulip 'Prins Carnaval' right

Photographs: Garden Picture Library

CUTTINGS

The Royal Botanic Gardens at Kew has arranged a series of study days on a wide range of subjects: paper-making, dyeing, ways of planting a herbaceous border. 'Plant Identification made simple' is the next course on offer (10 June, 10am-4pm, cost £30). Tutors Gail Bromley and Barrie Blewett explain the characteristic differences between families of plants and suggest some ways to unravel the gnomonic language of the taxonomist. On 13 June (10am-5pm) Sally Imbert leads a practical course on natural dyes, using well known and easily available plants to provide a rich palette of colours. The dyeing course costs £40. To reserve a place contact the Education Department, Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, Richmond, Surrey TW9 3AB (0181-332 5626).

'It's worth it for the lunch alone,' said a friend when I enquired about Catriona Boyle's garden school at Penpergwm Lodge, Abergavenny, Gwent NP7 9AS. The 'school' is made up of a series of days with lectures, usually by different people, in the morning and afternoon, with the famous lunch in between. On 2 June, Lady Skelmersdale will talk on summer bulbs, much less used in gardens than spring ones, while the unbeatable Penelope Hobhouse fills the afternoon with the aesthetics of garden design. Each school day starts with coffee at 10.30am and finishes at about 3.30pm; the cost is £45. To book or to enquire about the rest of the programme, call 01873 840208.

The best obituary I've read of the fine alpine plantsman Jack Drake, who died this winter, came by way of Jim and Jenny Archibald's spring seed list. Jim Archibald has a crisp, didactic writing style that I've always admired, but his obituary, with its description of a sunset glowing in the colours of Jack Drake's strain of lewisias, was elegant. The seeds are worth having, too: fistfuls of foxgloves, including *Digitalis thapsi* from the Sierra de Gredos in Spain. Their next list, to be sent out this summer, will include seed from their own cultivated hellebores and cyclamen, freshly gathered for summer sowing. For a copy, send a large stamped addressed envelope to Jim and Jenny Archibald, Bryn Collen, Frostrasol, Llandysul, Dyfed SA44 5SB.

Anna Pavord

Yesterday I was in the rainforest of the Pakaraima mountains on the borders of Guyana and Brazil. Today I am in Dorset, England. My body has made the trip back, but my mind hasn't caught up yet. For the past two weeks I've been working with a small gang of doctors among the Patamona people of the northern savannahs. Each of their settlements is five or six hours' walk from the next, so we walked and worked, walked and worked, seeing more than 900 people in seven makeshift clinics.

The Patamona have their own extremely effective plant-based medicines. Without disturbing any of that, the remote area medical team tries to deal with the things that the Amerindians can't. And along the way, we in turn learn a great deal about the things that we can't deal with. Such as going without food.

We carried in as much farina, rice and flour as we could. When that began to run out, the Patamona people showed us how to spin suppers from parakeets, which grew on palms and looked like bunches of brightly coloured dates. Like the Amerindian staple, cassava, they're poisonous until they've been properly prepared. When that time-consuming business is through, you have food that tastes like chestnuts with a dash of asparagus.

Lemon grass was another life-saver and grew in vast clumps in some cleared parts of the savannahs. It wasn't as vital as the parakeets that filled our stomachs, but when infused in the water that we boiled up on a wood fire early each morning it became one of the great treats of the day - especially if there was

wild honey to stir into it. As we hauled ourselves up creeper-swagged pitches, as we picked our way like trainee tightrope walkers on logs across the Marmite-coloured rivers, we fantasised extravagantly about the time and the place of our next brew of lemon grass tea.

It is not a South American plant; the clumps we saw must have been introduced at some time by people from the East Indies. Finding the climate much the same as that at home in southern India and Ceylon, the lemon grass flourished. I brought back a few roots, but I've no illusions about making it feel as though it is at home here. It is tender, so will have to come inside for the winter. That means planting it in a pot - most of it. I'm going to try some down in the hottest border of the vegetable garden, just to see whether it grows more freely in open ground. Either way, it will need to be well watered. The clumps we saw in Guyana were practically drowning.

Sun or shade? Full sun seemed to suit the clumps we found growing in the savannahs. We never found it in the darker, shadier environment of the rainforest, so I would guess that full sun and a reasonably rich soil will suit it best. It doesn't get a rich diet growing in Guyana, but I'll be cutting it regularly and the plant will have to work twice as hard as it normally does, to replace what I'm taking away.

I thought briefly about using the lemon grass as a centre-piece in a summer tub, but it's not essentially a decorative plant. It looks a bit like a miniature pampas, leaves up to 3ft long, thin, sharp-edged.

Like other grasses, it sends up flowering spikes, but nothing half as showy as pampas. So I'll have to turn to other plants to fill the tubs when the present blast of tulips is over.

I'm glad I got back in time to see them. The ensemble by the back door is wilder than anything that has ever happened there before. The background is provided by three big tubs of wallflowers, a mix called 'Persian Carpet', full of strange tawny purples and browns and buff. Among these stand pots of tulips, the most outrageous being 'Queen of Sheba'. This is one of the best of the lily-flowered group, with rich, mahogany-red flowers, finely edged with yellow.

'Prins Carnaval' is one of the few tulips strong enough to take the company of 'Queen of Sheba'. It's a good yellow, beautifully flamed with red. It's scented, too, not as strongly as the wallflowers, but with a soft, fleeting smell rather like that of primroses. The third tulip, 'Avignon', is upstaged by the other two, though it is a subtler match for the wallflowers. It's buff in bud, deepening to a complex, soft milky orange. I've now moved the 'Avignon' pots together, with a good buffer of wallflowers between them and their outlandish neighbours. That is one of the huge advantages of pot gardening. You can regroup plants with the minimum of fuss.

But what plants can I turn to for a summer display in these tubs? When I left for Guyana, three window ledges in the house were already packed with young plants and pricked-out seedlings. The petunias have come on well, each plant in its own 3-in pot. 'Purple Wave', a free-flowering, vigorous trailing petunia, will do well in the tubs outside, perhaps interleaved with the small-leaved grey *Helichrysum petiolare*. The petunia is too boisterous to risk with the *Lobelia richardii* coming on now in pots inside, though it would look good with the intense blue of an ordinary bedding *Lobelia* such as 'Crystal Palace'.

Lobelia richardii, an evergreen perennial, will probably partner the soft apricot-coloured double nasturtium 'Margaret Long', kept going from cuttings taken last year. Neither this nor the double-flowered red nasturtium 'Hermine Grashoff' set seed, so soft cuttings, taken like geranium cuttings, are the only way to propagate. The *Lobelia/nasturtium* duo on its own might be too sleepy. Too droopy. The pots they are in will need an upright centre-piece. Antirrhinums, perhaps? Either bronze or deep burgundy. Or nicotiana 'Lime Green'? There are four trays of those coming on. It's so hard to throw away seedlings, even when you know you have pricked out far more than you need.

For the courtyard, there are a few *Lotus berthelotii* which, I hope, will pour themselves over the front of a big iron manger. The leaves are tiny threads of soft grey, and they are more important than the flowers, which come very late in the season, the colour of burnt caramel. With them, yellow daisy-flowered bidens (sown on 8 March) and perhaps some rudbeckia. The bidens will provide more than enough yellow. But the tulips will reign for another couple of weeks yet. I shall be sorry to see their season go.

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From pot pourri to pot roast

A taste of ... lavender
from Norfolk, by
Nikki Spencer

Lavender may be strongly associated with scented clothes, but in fact it has also been used in cooking for hundreds of years – and is currently undergoing something of a revival. More and more chefs are using the pungent flower to flavour fish, lamb, sorbet and other foods, and this summer the New Covent Garden Soup Company is producing Potato, Leek and Lavender Soup for sale in grocery shops and supermarkets all over the country.

East Anglia is particularly suited to growing lavender because of its dry, light and sandy soil, according to Henry Head, managing director of the UK's largest commercial grower, Norfolk Lavender – although after the heavy rain last month he says that now he's not so sure. Dry weather from now until the end of July is the key to a good harvest. "I'd be very happy not to see another drop of rain," he says.

The family firm started growing lavender back in 1932, extracting oil for use in perfumery and drying flowers for pot pourri and



Purple haze: the tradition of using lavender as a flavouring is being revived

Photograph: Brian Harris

– more recently – for culinary purposes. The tea room at the company's headquarters at Caley Mill in Heacham sells lavender scones, lavender tea and lavender ice-cream, as well as jars of lavender marmalade.

Up on the coast at Wells-next-the-Sea, a passionate advocate of lavender in cooking is Carla Phillips, who runs The Moorings restaurant with her husband Bernard.

"Anything you can use rosemary for is pretty good with lavender, only it has more strength and vigour," enthuses Carla. She puts dried lavender (or fresh, when it's available) into salt water to flavour steamed fish, and uses it as a marinade with lemon and garlic on loin of lamb. She also makes an aromatic oil with lavender, steeping a sprig in oil with garlic and salt and pepper, to use a few weeks later on salads, or with mashed potato.

However, Carla warns against getting carried away with the idea of lavender as an ingredient. "Lavender is quite powerful and I

believe it works best when it is used subtly in savoury recipes. I think a sweet lavender sauce, for example, would be foul."

Lavender trails

● Norfolk Lavender, Caley Mill, Heacham (01485 570384) is open to the public, admission free, daily except Christmas Day. From mid-June to August you can see more than 100 acres of lavender in bloom by joining minibus tours of the fields (cost £3.95). From mid-July you can also see the distilling process, whereby the lavender is made into oil. As well as the tea rooms, the 19th-century mill has a garden centre and a shop that sells dried lavender flowers for cooking. The company also runs a mail-order service (01507 466466).

● The Moorings, 6 Freeman Street, Wells-next-the-Sea (01328 710949) is open from Thursday to Monday. Owner and chef Carla Phillips has written a book in conjunction with Norfolk Lavender entitled *Herbs from a Norfolk*

Kitchen – available for £3 plus 85p p&p from Norfolk Lavender.

● Two other Norfolk restaurants that use lavender regularly are Coningham Hall Hotel, Grimston, Kings Lynn (01485 600250), where the owner, Christine Forecast, grows more than 30 different varieties of lavender in her herb garden (open to the public daily 2pm-4pm, free); and Rococo, 11 Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn (01553 771483) where lavender and gin ice-cream is usually on the menu.

● The New Covent Garden Soup Company's Potato, Leek and Lavender Soup, made with fresh lavender flowers, will be available from 27 July to 9 August, price £1.49 for a carton.

Nectar of the Aztecs: in our article on chocolate, published on 4 April, we mentioned the Musée du Cacao et du Chocolat. Please note that the exhibition building – at 13 Grand Place, B 1000 Brussels – is currently undergoing refurbishment and is not open to the public until 1 July.

Flowers good enough to eat

The stuff of ... cakes. Sally Staples
discovers the delicate art of sugar craft

Here is a shop that will solve the dilemma of whether to buy a wedding cake or learn to make one. Cortell and Barratt, specialists in the delicate art of sugar craft, offer both custom-made cakes and classes in how to decorate them yourself.

June Whichello and her husband Ron began their business 14 years ago. On display in a conservatory behind the shop – where classes are held – is a cabinet containing examples of sugar flowers that might pass muster if exhibited at Kew Gardens: lilies, roses, gardenias, fuchsias, orchids, petunias. Every detail is there, from yellow-gold stamens at the centre of each flower, to the delicate twigs and leaves. The demand is growing for sugar flowers, and if you have a mind to try them yourself, June says she can teach a pupil in a single day.

In the shop, every cake-perfecting gadget is available to buy. The Whichellos are the sole importers to the UK of spe-

cial silicone moulds used for sugar craft in the US. They sell flower-cutters, coloured dusting powder, special cutters that achieve intricate lace effects on the icing, and even edible-ink pens. There is liquid glucose, piping jelly, confectioners' varnish to make the sugar leaves shine, and edible glue to stick petals on to the flower's centre. There are candles, modelling tools, non-stick rolling pins and boards, instruction books and a better selection of ribbons than you find in most haberdashers' shops.

The shop offers dozens of wedding cakes, from £199 to around £500. It accepts orders for cakes for children's birthdays and christenings and other special occasions. Classes for beginners cost from £20.

Cortell and Barratt, 40 High Street, Ewell, Surrey KT17 1RW (0181-393 0032). Open Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri 9am-5pm, Wed 9am-1pm, Sat 9am-4pm



Photograph: John Lawrence

GAMES

CROSSWORD PUZZLERS OUT FOR A DUCK: DON MANLEY EXPLAINS HIMSELF

Some of you reading this article will have been guided across from the crossword puzzle in this week's *Isis*. Some, I have no doubt, will be angry, some sad, and some perhaps even amused. Others may have hit this piece purely by chance.

The fact is that I have achieved – if "achieved" is the right word – something quite unusual, and have been invited by my long-suffering crossword editor, Louise Levene, to give an account of myself. In puzzle 149, published on 18 April in *Isis*, I invited solvers to fill in some squares with clashing letters "to accord with the shape they make", adding that "a final mark should be added at an appropriate intersection of two grid lines". The shape (see *Isis*) looked like a K knocked over. I assumed that readers would interpret it as a K (pi) and work out (perhaps following the hint in the puzzle's title "More or Less") the numerical differences between the clashing letters.

Thus, at the bottom of the pi the second I of IMAGINE in 26 down is three away from the second L of LILY at 41 across, so "3" is entered. Progressing up the leg of the pi, we get 3141, then 592... along the top and 7932 down the bottom leg. When you add the decimal point after the opening

digit, you get 3.141592... the value of π . Clever stuff? Obviously too clever for all eight or nine hundred entrants.

Looking back, I can see that the shape of the pi is a bit inaccurate, and perhaps in my day job as a maths editor I am used to seeing too many handwritten approximations to this transcendental wonder. But surely the shape wasn't that bad, and a few mathematicians would have seen what I was driving at? Alas, I miscalculated.

There has long been a tradition of providing impossible or near-impossible crosswords. Two *Listener* puzzles spring to mind: in one crossword by "Afril" in the Thirties or Forties, the publication expressed regret that none of its readers connected "Lombardy" and "Man of Words" with *The Cardinal's Snuff Box* at 28 across – a connection which some of us still fail to make; and about 20 years ago there was a puzzle entitled "Lip Service" by Leon, which involved playing a game of solitaire and spelling out the inscription on the Blarney Stone.

Afril was a master working out the rules of a new game; Leon was probably too clever for his own good. So where does that place Duck? I'm in the

Leon camp, though I suspect Leon knew what he was doing. I guess that, despite over 30 years of setting, I didn't. I am as dumbfounded by the zero correct entries as the hapless solvers who failed to recognise the malformed mathematical symbol. But my feelings, to be honest, are mixed: I'm tempted to be excited at having fooled everyone, but reckon I should feel guilty at having spoiled everyone's fun.

Only two more things need to be said. One is that we need to explore the new and strange in crosswords to keep the game alive; the other is that no one should ever set out deliberately to produce a puzzle that will stump all the solvers. On that charge I plead innocent, so my apology to *Isis* enthusiasts has some qualification. For most of the time, the setter must expect to be a gracious loser in a battle of wits in a contest that has a fair set of rules and conventions. That is how the battle is normally conducted in the *Isis* puzzle, and indeed all the puzzles in *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*.

Don Manley contributes as 'Duck' to *Isis*. His less-than-impossible puzzles appear weekly in the *Independent on Sunday*, in the guise of Quixote.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Lord Grade, 91, film maker, producer,
the Grade Company

We used to have races at school. I was a good, fast runner, but I never made it a part of my career. At the time, I had no idea what I was going to do, and certainly didn't know that I'd finish up in the entertainment industry.

If I could play anything, I would have liked to be a good tennis player. I had a house with a tennis court one time, but I wasn't any good, so I knew that it wasn't a natural thing for me. When you play games, you have to feel at ease with them.

I've tried golf, but unfortunately I just could not hit the ball, so I thought, why drive myself crazy? There's no point in anyone trying to play a game that they don't take to naturally.

When I was 18 years old I discovered the sport of dancing, and became an exceptional Charleston dancer. To begin with, I was a ballroom dancer. I wasn't very good, and it was hard to get a partner. But

when I started to Charleston, the girls were lining up to dance with me.

I learned to do intricate steps, because my father – as you probably know – was born in Russia. He was a very good Cossack dancer, and when I became a dancing act – which I was for eight years before I became an agent – I incorporated a lot of those steps that they do as Cossack dancers into my routines.

I am still the world Charleston champion. I won the competition at the Royal Albert Hall on 15 December 1926 and I learned only recently that one of the judges was Fred Astaire. If I'd known he was watching, I'd probably have failed with nerves.

Grade Productions produced 'On Golden Pond' and 'Sophie's Choice'. Their latest film, 'Something to Believe In', was released in the UK yesterday by Warner Bros. Maria Püello and William McNamara star with Tom Conti, Maria Schneider and Ian Bannen.

CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

Of all the many changes that have taken place in the chess world over the past three decades – the schism in the world championship, the bad influence of rapid play events on the general quality of play, the pernicious effects of computer analysis, and the introduction of the ludicrous Bobby Fischer Chess Clock among them – the one I find most depressing is the extinction of cheap chess sets made of French boxwood at the hands of an even less expensive plastic variety.

I say this not through any particular aesthetic delight at the tactile qualities of wood or a dislike of plastic itself. It's just the shape of the wooden knights' ears that I miss. The disappearance of the boxwood sets, you see, has deprived me of my one great claim to a place in chess history. For I was the first person ever, as far as I know, to pile an entire chess set on top of a single rook. And thanks to the despicable new plastic sets, that is an art that has totally died out.

You start with a rook (conventionally a white one, though black would, I suppose, be equally acceptable) placed normally on any square of a chessboard. The crenellations around its battlements provide the notches on which four pawns may be hung in a manner that allows the tops of the pawns to form the base for the next level.

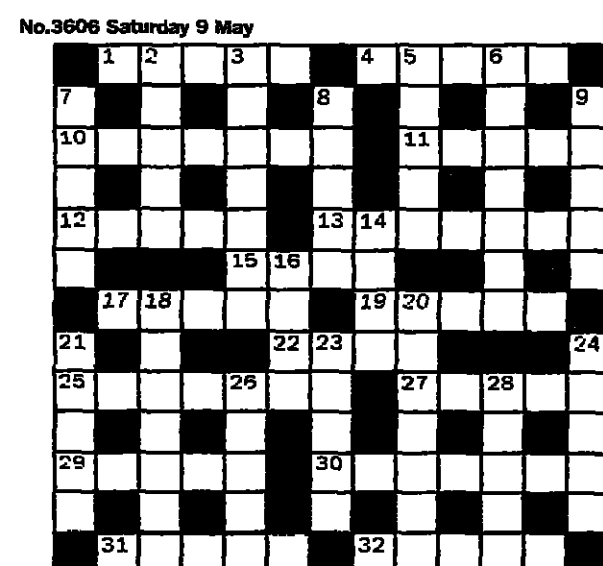
Now comes the clever bit. Take two knights, two bishops and one rook. If you hang the knights' muzzles over the rook's battlements, you will find they stay in place. And they become even more stable if you tuck a bishop in under each of their bellies. (Point the two bishops in opposite directions for general stability.) The entire rook-plus-four-minor-pieces combination may then be balanced upon the four pawns on the original rook. Not only were the boxwood sets perfectly weighted for this to work, but the ears of the knights, pointed friskily upwards, left a four-point horizontal base for the next level.

So another rook, two bishop and two knights are disposed of in similar manner, leaving us with two queens, two kings and 12 pawns. It's a little tricky, but you can get rid of two of the pawns between the ears of the knights. Delicately placed, they are light enough not to upset the balance, and their position becomes more stable when the next level is added.

Three pawns can be hung round each queen's head, again forming a level triangular base of pawn-tops for the next storey. At the very top two kings may be suspended by their crosses on those very useful crenellations of the final rook. The last four pawns may be balanced on assorted bishops, with one or two even on the topmost rook between the kings.

The execution of this fine pile took me most of my fourth year at Cambridge. Then the sets went out of fashion and my hope for eternal fame vanished with them.

CONCISE CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- He-goat (5)
 - Broadcasting (2,3)
 - Stir (7)
 - Inexpensive (5)
 - Correct (5)
 - Make a list of (7)
 - Solemn word (4)
 - Convulsive movement (5)
 - Call to mind (5)
 - Long, bushy hair (4)
 - Masculinity (7)
 - Heat unit (5)
 - Rough hut (5)
 - First (7)
 - Burglar's tool (5)
 - Gemstone (5)
- DOWN**
- Cake topping (5)
 - Outbuildings (4,3)
 - Mother-of-pearl (5)
 - Climber's aid (3,4)
 - Forces chaplain (5)
 - Sum owing (5)
 - Rapidity (5)
 - At that time (4)
 - Rounds for firearms (5)
 - (5) (4)
 - Nom-de-plume (3,4)
 - Banning (7)
 - Gather (5)
 - Unscripted remark (2,3)
 - Walk slowly (5)
 - Caulking material (5)
 - Decree (5)

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:

ACROSS: 5 Wreck, 8 Amending (Recommendation), 9 Image, 10 Campaign, 11 Unity, 14 Sn, 16 Embark, 17 Estate, 18 Inn, 20 Alone, 24 Smallpox, 25 Cf. lat, 26 Allusion, 27 Tong. DOWN: 1 Watch, 2 Gernie, 3 Ideas, 4 Knight, 6 Ruminate, 7 Cephalopod, 12 Small fry, 13 Maitre, 14 Skill, 15 Yen, 19 Nameless, 21 Elder, 22 Sprout, 23 Ez-pat.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Game all; dealer South	
North	
♠ 8 6	
♥ Q 10 5	
♦ 10 7 6 3	
♣ K 8 6 5	
West	
♠ A 10 9 4	
♥ 9 7 2	
♦ 8 5 2	
♣ 7 4 3	
South	
♠ K O J 5	
♥ A K J	
♦ K O J	
♣ J 10 9	

Oh dear! I shall have to give up offering well-meant advice and stick strictly to reporting facts. This deal produced a peevish letter from a correspondent.

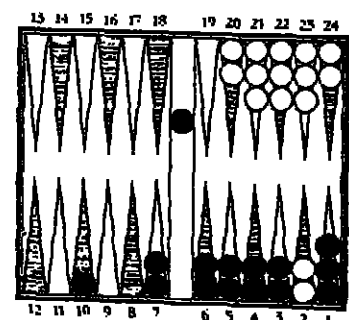
The bidding was simple: South opened Two No-trumps and North raised to game. West led ♠ 4 against Three No-trumps, obviously following my recent suggestion that the lead of a ten against a no-trump contract implied a strong suit with two higher honours. Dummy followed with the six and East (who had clearly noticed my other recent point, that rather than make an apparently useless attempt with near-garbage in partner's suit, it was more useful to give a count) thoughtfully played the two to suggest a three-card holding.

When ♠ 6 won, declarer still had two guards in spades and he attacked clubs. Now it was too late for the defenders to get a long card in any suit working and they came to only the four obvious tricks (a spade, a diamond and two clubs).

Yes, the lead of ♠ 10 defeats the contract when West ducks his partner's next spade return. Yes, East could have done everything that was necessary by covering ♠ 6 with his seven at trick one after which, again, West ducks the next spade return.

But the real culprit on the hand was declarer! Why? He really should have tried ♠ 8 from dummy at trick one – a play that could hardly cost and would have provided an unexpected third stopper in spades.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



Here's a position that confronted Murray "Quickdouble" Sharp at the Double Fives the other night. Murray, playing Black, had not only doubled early but had also accepted the redouble when all around him in the choutte had very sensibly passed. In his own inimitable style he had turned the game round to reach the position above. Should be redouble to 8?

The position is highly volatile and could change dramatically over the next two rolls. If Murray enters with any 6, White will be all but lost. Conversely, if he stays on the bar and White rolls a 6 then all the pressure will be on Murray. Most people have a natural fear of doubling from the bar against a 5-point board but Quickdouble is not of this ilk, and he redoubled with hardly a moment's thought. His opponent took Quickdouble rolled 63 and comfortably won the game. The question is: were the double and take correct?

The answer is that this is an excellent benchmark position. Black should double and White should take. If White were any weaker, for example if he had only a 4-point, or if he had a blot exposed on his 6-point, then he should drop.

How do you evaluate this over the board? Black should note that if he rolls a 6, or he stays on the bar and then White doesn't roll a 6, he will become a prohibitive favourite, so now is the time to double. White should note that if Black doesn't roll a 6 and White does roll a 6, then he will have a very strong position. As this will happen nearly 25 per cent of the time, this gives him enough chances to take.

The final point to make is that success goes to players who are good at applying pressure. Quickdouble Sharp certainly did that in this position, applying exactly the right pressure at the right time.

هكذا من الأصل

Clocking the sun

If you want to use a sundial to tell the time, writes Caroline Donald, make sure it is custom-built for your garden – or you may find inaccuracies creeping in

As we hurtle towards the year 2000, how we measure time gains a special significance. So it was with a sense of satisfaction that I sought out David Harber, maker of sundials, at his Oxford workshop. The millennium bug may be a cause of increasing concern, yet the sun will rise and set regardless of computer crashes, and Harber's dials will continue to measure the hours, using methods first discovered thousands of years before Christ effectively started the whole millennium business.

Harber's works range from a simple obelisk that casts a shadow on markers set in the ground, to a copper hemisphere resembling a tilted mortar that is engraved with the hours and the tropics of Cancer and Capricorn and owes its origins to Berossos, an Egyptian priest, who worked out the earth's circumference to within 500 miles, 300BC. "Over here, in AD1400 we still thought that we would fall off the edge," says Harber.

Having left Dartington school at 15, Harber discovered at first hand that the Earth is round when he learnt to fly. Meanwhile he also acquired metalwork skills while running a travelling theatre group on a boat in France. And then "it all suddenly gelled. I bought a book on how to make sundials and the end result was my first armillary sphere, which was snapped up." Today, these armillary spheres, which look like a cross between an old-fashioned globe and a ball of string, are his best-selling line, with prices from about £1,500 for a brass one (they also come in bronze and stainless steel). This may seem a bit steep, but all his dials are custom-built, and marked with mottoes and measurements that are important to the client.

"You can move them to a degree," says Harber, relishing the unintentional pun, "but they need to be in the exact location to work absolutely accurately. You can move them north and south quite easily, but they start to get inaccurate if you shift them east and west. For instance, there is a four-minute difference between the time when the sun is overhead in Greenwich and in Oxfordshire."

From the spot in Greenwich or Oxfordshire, Edinburgh or Timbuktu, the dial can be inscribed with the exact direction and number of miles to a significant place for a client anywhere in the world. "Invariably, they are exotic," says Harber. "We don't get many pointing to Milton Keynes."

The tradition of mottoes goes back to the days when sundials were the only form of time-keeping in a community, and where usually erected by the local squire or a

scholar. "They were seen as oracles, the voice of something ethereal and spiritual," says Harber.

He provides a list for clients taken from dials of the past, usually exhorting the reader not to be a wastrel, or reminding him in a cheery way that death is just around the corner, though the translation given for *carpe diem* – Ah, take the cash in hand and waive the rest – is more an example of the blithe sense of humour of Harber and his wife Sophie (who runs the business side of things) than of their linguistic skills.

Although they look simple, Harber's wall-mounted dials, similar to those you see on churches and manor houses, are painstakingly calculated for that wall alone.

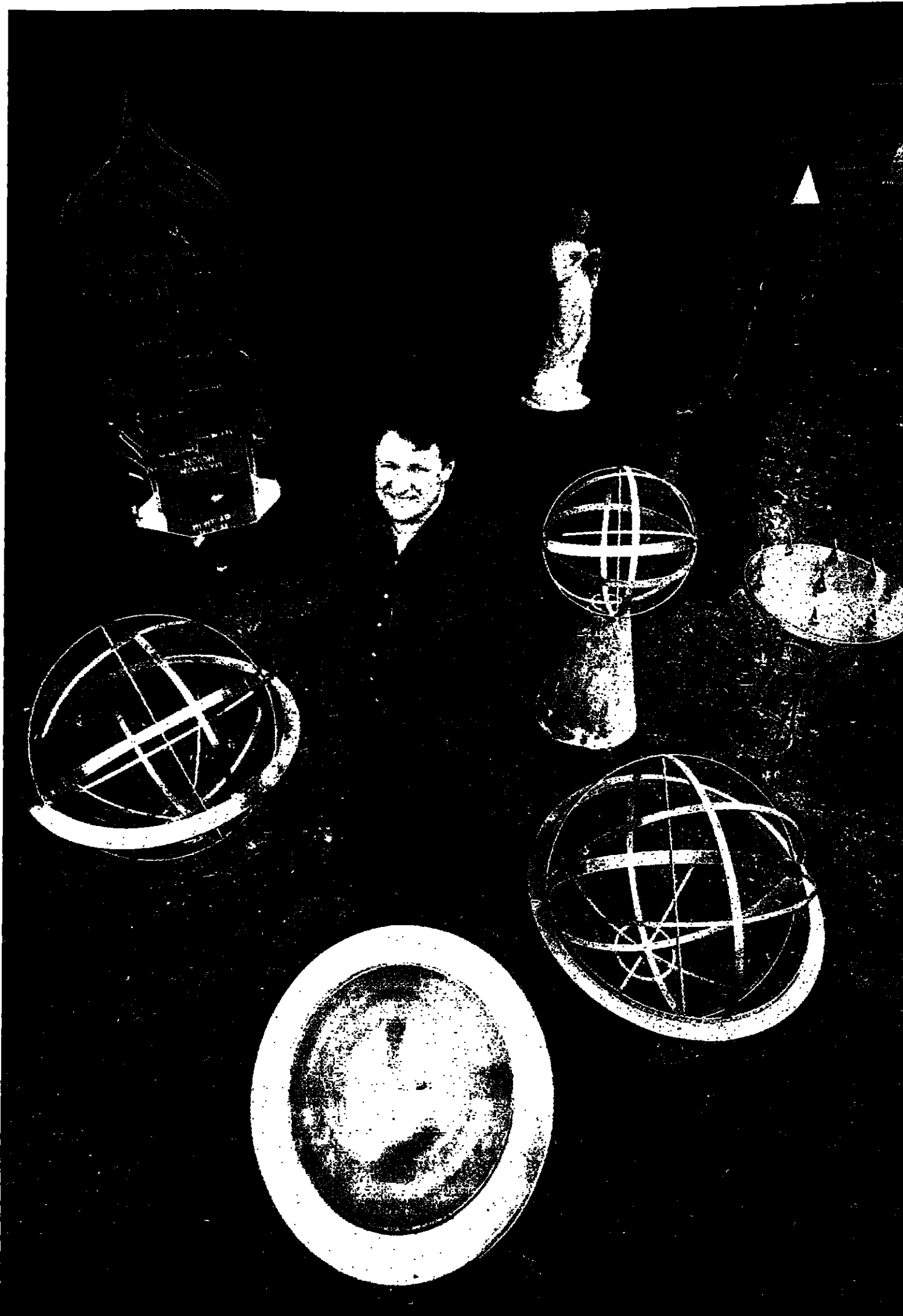
He is as polite as he can be about the mass-produced sundials you can buy at garden centres: "It's nice that people are interested, but it seems a shame to spend your money on something that doesn't fulfil its purpose. There was a batch that came over from the Far East, where the gnomon [the shadow-caster] had been made for an obscure latitude somewhere below the latitude of the south of France, and fixed the wrong way round, so they were never going to tell the time."

At the moment Harber is making a slate-and-copper wall dial especially for his stand at the Chelsea Flower Show. It has been mathematically calculated exactly to mark noon for the occasion – a risky move, but an impressive one if it comes off, in front of the world's smartest horticultural clientele.

When we met, Harber was about to set off for Chicago to unveil an armillary sphere for a bank, then on to Martha's Vineyard for another installation. "Most of the people I meet are really interesting," he says of his necessarily financially comfortable clientele (though prices start at a not-too-unreasonable £500). "They want to put some thought into what they are commissioning. What you say on a dial should be done glibly, it is going to be there for quite a while."

In June, he completes a sundial for a private client made from monoliths of 150-million-year-old Jurassic stone that will mark the positioning of the planets around the sun at dawn on 1 January, AD2000. It will take 27,000 years for these positions to repeat. Now that is quite a while.

David Harber Sundials (01491-576956; fax: 01491-413524; e-mail: sales@harber-sundials.demon.co.uk; website www.harber-sundials.demon.co.uk)



Sun king: David Harber at his Oxford workshop with retro-tech sundials. Invariably, they are exotic. We don't get many pointing to Milton Keynes' Photograph: Peter Macdarmid



Shining example: a French polisher at work Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

Join the gleam team

Sally Staples brightens up her life and her furniture on a French polishing course

If you have any old furniture that seems past redemption and has been stashed away in an attic, think again. In just a few hours you could learn how to strip away a dull or stained surface and use the skills of traditional French polishing to bring a glossy shine to an old table or chair – or, indeed, any piece of wood that needs a new lease of life.

All that's required is that you bring to six three-hour sessions a pair of rubber gloves, some protective clothing and the item that needs restoration.

Martin Masterson, the French polisher and tutor who runs a course at London's Kensington and Chelsea adult education college, will provide students with all the other materials for just £5 a head. These include steel wool, methylated spirits, old rags, white spirit, sandpaper and the French polish itself.

Stripping the wood is the initial task, and on the day I was there a group of 10 stood round to watch as Martin illustrated the technique on an oak breakfast tray. The first stage is to remove all the traces of the old polish or varnish. With antique furniture that has been French polished, this is usually done with meths. But modern pieces that have been lacquered or varnished need to be treated with paint-stripper.

Martin rubbed a meths-soaked rag all over the tray's surface until it became a little

sticky. Then he took some steel wool and rubbed from side to side, following the grain of the wood as the polish was gradually removed. Once the tray's surface was quite pale, coarse sandpaper was used to remove any scratches and dents in the wood. Next it was sanded down with fine paper to regain the smooth surface.

Using gentle movements Martin demonstrated how to retain some of the natural irregularities. Part of the attraction of wood is that some marks are visible

At that stage the students set about stripping their own pieces of furniture. Tony Colombotti had brought in a large mahogany box once used by an architect for pens and pencils. Loulene Kuschke had a rosewood box, and other students had variously brought a bedside table, a six-legged stool and a box made from beech.

Everyone worked at their own pace, and Martin walked round the class giving advice and preparing for the next stage: staining the wood.

"If you go into shops, they will try to sell you dozens of different colours for staining wood," he said. "But in fact all you need are

two basic colours – dark oak and red mahogany. By mixing and diluting these two you can achieve almost any colour you want."

Martin explained that the mahogany box should not be painted with the mahogany stain, as the effect would be too red. Instead he recommended a dark oak stain. As all the stains are oil based, they should be diluted with

turpentine or white spirit when necessary. Once the box was painted with the dark oak stain, and the excess wiped off, it was almost ready for polishing. But first a little sanding down was advised.

Martin demonstrated how this could be done using gentle movements to retain some natural irregularities. Part of the attraction of wood is that some marks are visible, giving character to the piece.

Since the course concentrates on traditional French polishing, there are no short cuts to learning the art of making what is called the "rubber" to polish the piece of furniture. Martin gave a demonstration of this by folding a

piece of wadding inside a rag and moulding it with his thumb and finger into the shape of a mouse. The rag must be free of lint, to avoid bits of fabric sticking on to the wood during polishing.

Before the rubber comes into play, a special polishing mop made from camel hair is used to coat the surface with a full-strength solution of the polish, which should be diluted by one-third to two with methylated spirits. The second and subsequent layers are put on with the rubber, and the polishing must be done in a figure of eight to keep the layers thin and evenly distributed.

A drop of linseed oil is added to the wood to lubricate the polish, and the process is repeated many times until the required effect is achieved.

The final touches involve removing the oil from the polish by squeezing the rubber several times in undiluted polish and gently wiping over the surface until all oil traces are gone. Students are advised to leave their furniture to dry for at least a week before using it.

The French polishing course at Kensington and Chelsea College, London, (0171-573 5333) runs for six weeks and costs £69. Martin Masterson also runs a course on decorative surface which includes tortoiseshell, crackle glazing, marbling and wood graining.

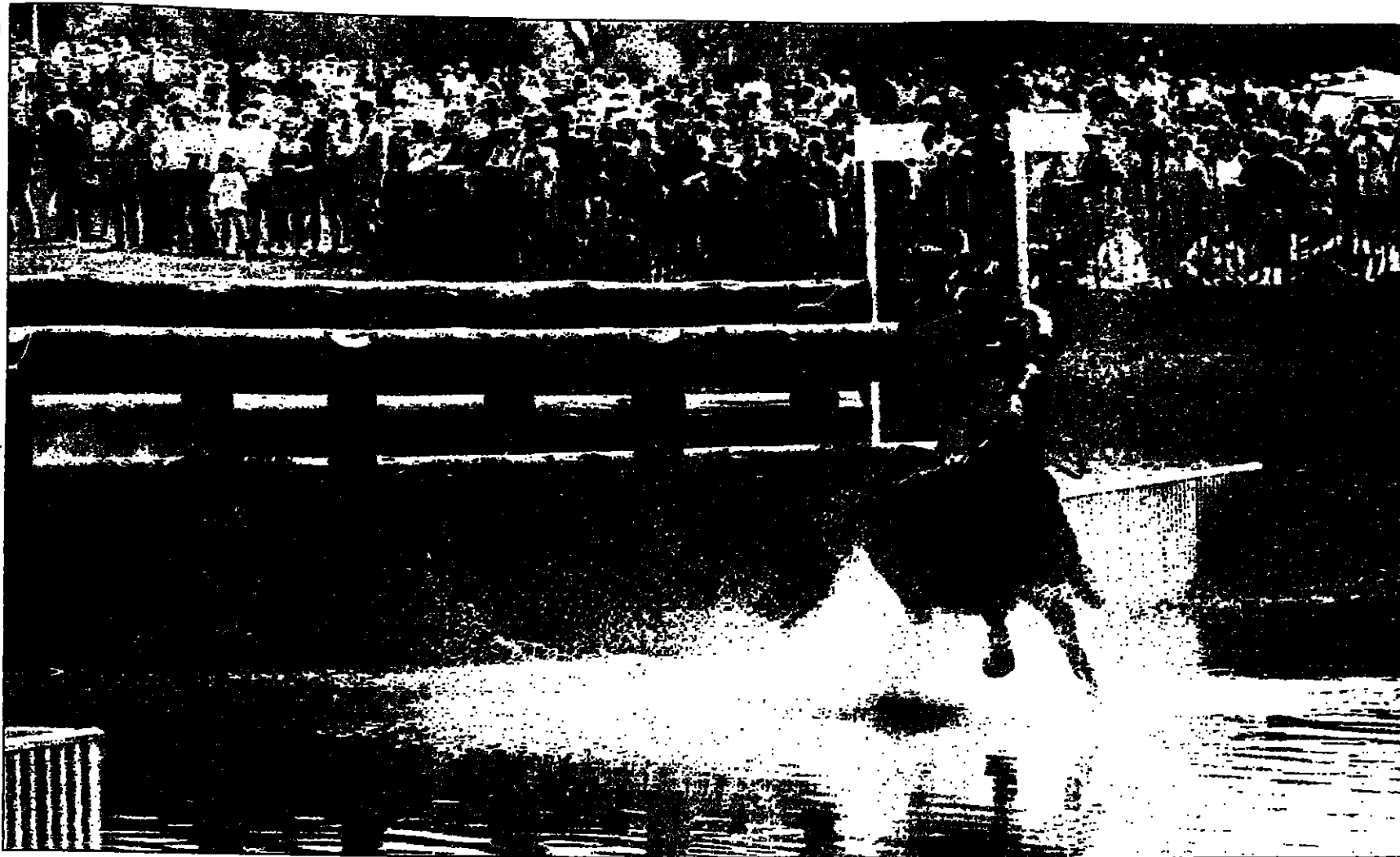
There are more interesting things than sport on a Saturday afternoon. Murder, for instance.

THE SATURDAY PLAY continues with "The Black Box" by St. Dennis, written by John D. Smith, Chris Smith, Dr. G. Smith, P. Smith, and J. Smith. The afternoon 8.00-4.00.

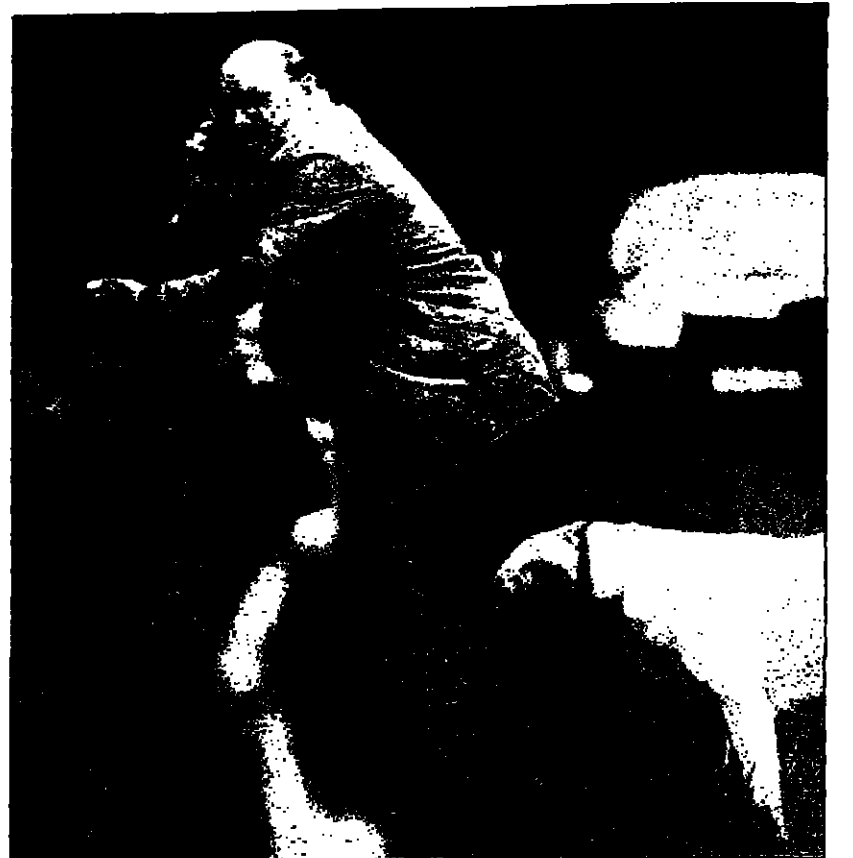
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YOU'LL SEE THINGS DIFFERENTLY



The cross-country course must maintain a difficult balance, being designed to test the competitors' nerve, endurance and speed without endangering them



PHOTOGRAPHS BY
DAVID ASHDOWN AND PETER JAY

Hats off to heroic horses and rapid riders

By Genevieve Murphy

AFTER two sedate days of dressage, the Duke of Beaufort's estate is ready to receive the masses. Some 250,000 spectators will have turned up for the four days of the Badminton Horse Trials by the time that the £26,000 first prize is presented here tomorrow – and the vast majority will come for the hurly-burly of today's cross-country.

They come, primarily, to watch intrepid horses and riders jump dauntingly testing fences that most of us would never consider tackling in a month of Sundays. Hugh Thomas, director and

course designer, has no compunction about frightening the living daylights out of the riders, but he is ever anxious to avoid hurting the horses.

Badminton's inaugural contest, back in 1949, was prophetically called "The Most Important Horse Event in Great Britain." It was born as a result of the dismal British performance in the Olympic three-day event of 1949, when it was held at Aldershot.

Having watched the annihilation of the home riders, the last Duke of Beaufort decided to host an annual contest in which Britons could gain experience in the all-round test of dressage,

speed, endurance, cross-country and show jumping. Ten years later the present Duke (then David Somerset) was runner-up on Countryman III.

Badminton is now the greatest and the oldest three-day event in the world. It attracts all the leading international riders (the winners of the last four Olympic Games are competing here this weekend) and it boasts an enormous outdoor shopping centre.

The 288 trade stands, where you can buy everything from clothes to cookers, will have unloaded a huge quantity of goods over the four days. This morning will be particularly profitable, for regulars know that they have to arrive early on cross-country morning in order to avoid the traffic jams. What better than to breakfast here at one of the food stalls before going on a shopping spree?

Thomas has no worries about this year's traders failing to book for 1999. He already has a long waiting list of those who are eager to fill any vacancy.

Copies of these photographs – and any others by The Independent's sports photographers David Ashdown, Peter Jay and Robert Hallam – can be ordered by telephoning The Independent on 0171-293-2534.

Yesterday at Badminton, page 19



Stately stables: Horses return after the day's competition



Formal attire: Horse and rider (above) relax in impressive surroundings after completing their dressage test, while (left) great care is taken to ensure hats and gloves are immaculate



3.40 Putuna

3.10 TOTE SPRINT HANDICAP (CLASS B) £50,000 added 3YO 6f Penalty Value £36,638 **C4**

1 11400- BAY PRINCE (203) (D W Shepherd) M Channon 67 _____ T O'Leary 9 96

dark blue, white stars on sleeves and cap

ro Sceptic 3.20 Nov-	1	3
00 Just Blackout 4.52	2	24

13	06-064	JOLI FILLE (12) J Weirwright 8 7	A McCarthy (3) 1	7	000-40	SHALAAH
14	6000-4	SILENT PRIDE (12) M Usher 8 7	J Fowle (7) 2	8	421-00	JEDI KNIGHT
		- 14 declared -		9	415-00	ROYAL R.

4.00 Brook 3.00 Wood-ris-
4.00 Roman Outlaw

Worcester

5.15 Meeson Magic

16	34	WHITELAWHILE (133)	Miss V Williams	10 12	J Williams	
15	0	KUMEDENA LADY (42)	J Fox	17	T J Murphy	
17	0	LEADING NOTE (42)	Miss H Knight	10 17	Calfrey	
			- 17 declared -				
BETTING: 7-2 Merckless Cup, 5-1 Irad, Ministerial Model, 6-1 Mulder, 7-1 Whitelawhile, 8-1 The Roundells, 16-1 Gold Clapper, Jazz, 20-1 others							
WEATHER: CLOUDS, HAZY, WINDY							

من الاصل

In August, Shireel, who flopped in fourth when market leader for Rambling Rose's race at Nottingham, is clearly better than that though probably nothing special. And, being the only maiden in the field, she is passed over. Virtuoso was beaten 12 lengths when unplaced to Midnight Line in the Pretty Polly Stakes on Sunday. Putana, third in both juvenile runs, got home by a neck from Arcevia at Epsom on her reappearance but that form took a knock when the runner-up finished well beaten in Wednesday's Cheshire Oaks.

15	15	6500-0	BOLLIN FRANK (18) (D)
17	16	1520-0	BROCTONE GOLD (22)

4 (JBI) M Chapman 4 9 0.....S Carson (7) 13	8 4-0-30 JUST BOB (15) (D) S Kettler 9 9
(7) (D) M W Easterby 4 9 0.....I Charnoch 15	9 -2-20 MUNGIO PARK (12) (D) Mrs J Paine
J (7) (D) M W Easterby 5 9 0.....T Lucas 1	10 0-0-00 GORETSKI (7) (GD) N Tinkler 5 9 3

4 -0000P BRANDSEY MINISTER (5)
5 54-4411 CROFTON LAKE (7) (C)

2	WOODFRAIR, 4-1 COAST JONES, 5-1 PLOTTERBY	11	00-SUP WEST LITTON (7) M W Easterby 6
3	BALCONY BOY, DORANE WAY, HARRY 33-1 others	12	0 PRIMROSE HILL (8) H Alexander 5
<hr/>			
2	ROGE (179) (2) (BF) K Bailey 8 17 7_N Williamson	12	3F-533 THE HERBIVORE (28) M J Roberts
3	WEST, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800		

bert Buchanan, Oliver's Secret, Har-

CHASE (F) 23,250 2m 711youds
CHASMAN (208) (F) P Nicks 8 11 X R Thornton
 (505) Mrs S Smith 7 10 12 X Algonquin
CHEST (211) (F) N Dales 5 11 2 G Supple
CHIT (118) (F) N Twiston-Dave 7 10 2 J Goldsmith
CHURCH (67) M Campon 8 10 3 T Descombe
CHURCH (141) Mrs S Smith 7 10 6 G Smeeth
 6-40-02 SUPER RITCHART (115) (O) 8 Peirce
 5-6-02 THE CAMPGAMMA (116) (O) 7 O'Hall 7
 5-23-02 TREASURE AGAIN (70) (O) Mrs M A
 7 10504 LADY CLARINA (17) (O) 9 Brookshire
 11-7 declared -
BETTING: 15-5 Bitontanzour, 11-7 Mr Magnifico
Again, 10-1 Mr Christie, 12-1 Pyralis, Rupert

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for her reappearance. She can confirm Newmarket form with the fourth, Mamoussika who has three lengths to find but comes here all the better; for her Nell Gwyn sixth of seven behind 1000 Guineas fourth Cloud Castle, beaten three and a half lengths. Fok of the others could be Bittleyaar, who landed the last two of four races at two - the latest with overwhelming trouble in running to beat Special Treat half a length at Doncaster in October.

Selection: SHUHRA

DISSIDENT (7) (D) R Winkler 583...LIAM'S WELL (7) (D) M W Easterby 483...S Fin...

Minimum weight: 7st 10lb. True handicap weights: Spa Lane 7st 8lb.
 BETTING: 6-1 Monodragon, 7-1 Arlequin, Kilmarnock Girl, 10-1 Nautica
 Charming Admiral, Highfield Fizz, Jacinda, Black Ice Boy, 12-1 others

ING EDGE (00) (CD) T Eastby 6 11 70

P Mickey
 R McCreath
 SETTING: 7-2 Charley Lambert, 9-2 Tashline Talk, Vignaro, 7-1 Apollo's Daughter, 8-1 Stylish Interval, Don't Forget Curtis, 10-1 others

3 I Aspell 3 1 DRAGON LORD (80) (3) Lucy Harris 4 11 6 ... Mr S Durack (3)

BY COPPER Mass P White 5 10 13.....Mr P C
LIE FOOTSTEPS T Eberington 4 10 13.....L C

W Merson	14	PAXFORD TROOPER P Nichols 4 10 13	L Cummins
V Stacey	15	RICHMOND LADY (424) C Drew 8 10 13	M Mooney
9 11 2 C Llewellyn	16	RICHMOND LADY P Hobbs 5 10 13	Air R Wilder
W Mr P Costello (7)	17	RISSING TALISKER T Foster 5 10 13	J Mogford
	18	WAGER T Foster 4 10 13	L Aspell
Stammore, Treasure	19	WITHSWAY LADY E Wheeler 5 10 13	O Leary
4, 15-1 others	20	SALTGETOWN J A d'Almeida 4 10 13	B & Co

[illegible]

S	T	Hours
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Each way, a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 & 4	Each way, a quarter the odds, places 1, 2, 3 & 4
C-Coral, H-Win Hit, L-Luckies, S-Starting, T-Tote	C-Coral, H-Win Hit, L-Luckies, S-Starting, T-Tote

4. B4 C-Original H-None H1 - 1st instance

50-71; 4. Baylham 8-1 18 ran; 3. Dorr's Double
Miss All Alone, 7/4, 1/4 (R Fahey). Total: £2840;
£560, £170, £100, £300. DF: £18430; CSP:
£19873. Throat: £975280. Tiro: not won (pool
of £442.33 to Lingfield 30 today).

4.10: 1. PRIDE OF BROXTON (Dean McK-
instellar 4-1; 3. Ryethfield 11-4 fan; 18 ran
1/4, 1 (A Stewart. Newmarket, Total: £550;
£280, £300, £100. DF: £1603; CSP: £1654
Tiro: £820.

3.00: 1. ANGIE BABY (S Maloney) 3-1
2. Hasty Words 9-4 fan; 3. Lucy Marshall
11-6 ran; 1/4, 2, 1/4, 1/4. Chelmsford, Total

4-1 tar,
 Total: £38.30; £12.00, £10.00
 CSE: £83.83 Total: £900

LIVE COMMENTARY RESULTS

	971	981
LINCOLNFIELD	971	981
BEVERLEY	972	982
JACOBSON	973	983

Call cost \$10 per minute. U.S. int'l. \$20.

Cricket: As England's new captain inspired Surrey yesterday, Leicestershire were breaking records

Stewart leads by example

By David Llewellyn
at The Oval

IT HAS been rather a good week for Alec Stewart from a personal as well as from a team point of view. Apart from his appointment as the England captain, there has been the satisfaction of being an integral member of a Surrey side that has qualified (with a home tie) for the quarter-finals of the Benson & Hedges Cup. Yesterday it was rounded off with a fine hundred as Surrey set a challenging, but not impossible, target for Somerset to attack.

For much of his admirable innings, his fourth century in the 50-over competition, Stewart was partnered by Ben Hollis. Together the master and his apprentice entertained a sizeable and appreciative crowd. Hollis, who has been out of sorts of late and is in desperate need of an opportunity to show what he can do, was content to be a spectator himself for around a dozen overs. He was in a prime position to see at first hand what Stewart can do.

There was a calculated feel to Stewart's innings. He paces himself perfectly in this kind of form. Unhurried, yet not hanging around. He is renowned for his fitness and at 35 was giving Hollis some 15 years, but it did not show. The running

between the wickets was exemplary and sharp. It prompted his coach Keith Medley to say later: "Alec is a fit man and he looks as if he will go on playing for a long time."

He certainly batted for a long time, longer even than Hollis. But by the time the youngster fell, leg before to Marcus Trescothick for 91, he had done enough to convince everyone that he was back to the sort of form with the bat that had seen him hit a marvellous match-winning innings in the Cup final at Lord's last year.

In one devastating over he dismissed three deliveries from Pakistan leg spinner Mushtaq Ahmed for six - two of them out of the ground. There were eight further boundaries in his mature 98-ball innings. Stewart lasted into Trescothick's next over before he too succumbed, but by then he had the satisfaction of having shared in a 185-run partnership with Hollis as well as batting himself into good nick in time for the start of the Texaco Trophy series against South Africa which gets under way in less than a fortnight's time. Somerset were threatening to steal Stewart's thunder after a 158-run opening stand between player-coach Dermot Reeve and Mike Burns but there was still plenty left in the match for Stewart to savour.

Smaller counties launch new format

MINOR COUNTIES cricket unveils the launch of an expanded MCC Trophy this weekend. The one-day competition that boasts the carrot of a Lord's final has undergone a radical facelift in the wake of the England and Wales Cricket Board's "Raising the Standard" initiative. It has absorbed the 18 first-class Board XI's minus Glamorgan but plus Huntingdonshire, to become a 38-county competition and has been split into eight regional qualifying groups.

The first group games, now 60 overs apiece, are in the South West tomorrow when Devon play Dorset at Budleigh Salterton and Cornwall meet Somerset at Taunton.

In the championship, played over two days and still the exclusive domain of the 20 Minor Counties, each team will play three of their nine matches under grade rules. This is a two-year experiment in which three games will be one-innings con-

tests of 120 overs each, with a provision for outright wins in the event of the first innings finishing early. But the playing conditions include a points scoring system that deducts points for conceding runs and losing wickets in the second innings.

There are four new Minor Counties captains in 1998. Cambridge blue Roger Clitheroe has replaced Philip North at Wales, ex-Middlesex batsman Jason Harrison is Tim Scriven's successor at Buckinghamshire and Bryan Jones has taken over from Ian Payne at Shropshire. Cambridgeshire's Nigel Gadsby has also stood down, handing the reins to Ajaz Akhtar.

● Durham have added Simon Brown to their squad for the first time this season for today's Benson and Hedges Cup tie against Yorkshire at Headingley. He has been ruled out by a knee injury but has played in the three-day second XI match against Gloucestershire which ended yesterday.



Alec Stewart strikes out on his way to a century at The Oval yesterday

Photograph: David Ashdown

Hampshire sell County Ground

HAMPSHIRE have sold their County Ground headquarters in Southampton to the building firm Berkeley Homes for £5m.

The County Ground has been Hampshire's home since 1885 and they will use the money to help finance the building of their new ground at West End on the northern outskirts of the city. The total cost of relocating is £16m, with over £7m having already been received in a National Lottery grant.

Chief executive, Tony Baker, said: "The ground at Northlands Road has been an important part of Hampshire's history and when the time comes we will be sad to go." Northlands Road will be developed into high quality housing after Hampshire have moved on by 2000.

Major defeat for the Minors

By Mike Carey
at Leicester

Leicestershire 382-6
Minor Counties 126
Leicestershire win by 256 runs

THE Minor Counties suspected they would be in for some serious leather-hunting here yesterday, given the current form of Darren Maddy and Leicestershire's need to pep up their run rate to try to ensure a place in the quarter-finals of the Benson & Hedges Cup.

They were not disappointed. Maddy obliged by making 151 from 125 balls. Leicestershire's 382 for six was the second highest total in the competition's history and the Minors themselves embarrassed their hosts by blitzing some erratic bowling before subsiding to the second-heav-

est defeat the competition has known.

It all left Leicestershire with a healthy new run rate of 23.32. Their fate still depends on what happens in today's games, but they will not have much of a future anyway if their opening bowlers, David Mills and Alan Mullally are as profligate with the new ball as they were here.

Earlier this week Leicestershire bowled 53 wides, a Cup record. That was due in part to this pair operating for reasons known best to themselves, at the wrong ends. There was no such excuse this time and David Ward, a fine player of fast bowling in his Surrey days, showed his talents had not diminished by taking 18 off Mills' opening over.

Eventually Vince Wells, moving the ball around at accurate medium pace, restored

some order and emerged with six for 25. The Minors will be highly disappointed at slumping from 85 for 1 to 126 all out, especially after keeping their heads very well in the field.

They did not enjoy too much rub of the green. Maddy, for instance, might well on another day have been caught off a leading edge at 13. But after that he was awesome, both in the power and the variety of his strokes. He hit three sixes and 19 fours.

On this pitch there was no margin of error for part-time bowlers. But amid the carnage, Cumberland's Marcus Sharp conceded only 29 runs from 10 overs, before Maddy, making his last 50 from only 27 balls. Jonathan Dakin (44 from 29 balls) and Chris Lewis (35 from 30 balls) emphasised that it was a batsman's day.

Eagles wary of Wigan's cup backlash

Rugby League
By Dave Hadfield

BY THE strange serendipity that attends fixtures lists, today's meeting between Sheffield Eagles and Wigan provides a classic case study in how two sides will react to the biggest Wembley upset of recent times.

Just seven days after Sheffield won the Silk Cut Challenge Cup, they face their vanquished Wembley opponents, Wigan, in the Super League. Who says that computers do not have a sense of humour?

The joke for Sheffield is that they are now expected to do what they refused to do at Wembley by succumbing to Wigan's might, not to mention their wounded pride.

"It's bound to be a bit special for them," said the Sheffield coach, John Kear. "But don't forget that it's a special day for us as well."

Sheffield have two ambitions. One is to attract a decent crowd to the Don Valley Stadium to celebrate last week's success; the other is to demonstrate that it was no fluke. Kear can add the cup-tied Steve Molloy to his Wembley squad and his only slight doubt concerns Dave Watson, who has a calf strain that saw him substituted late in the final after a fine individual contribution.

What is hard to quantify is how the Eagles will respond to their week of unfamiliar adulation and media attention.

Their post-Wembley party went on as long as you would expect of such a convivial club and when Mark Aston collected his Lance Todd Trophy on Wednesday night, his acceptance speech was delivered in a croaky whisper. "I won't be able to call many moves," he admitted.

"I've lost my voice with all the interviews."

After all this, and a civic reception last night, is it realistic to expect him and his teammates to produce the game of a lifetime twice in a week? Probably not, but then it was never realistic to expect them to win at Wembley.

It has also been an interesting week at Wigan. Defeat in a major final was a new experience for many of their players, just as losing at Wembley was for most of their supporters. There's been a good deal of soul-searching at the club, tempered by a determination not to over-react to what is, after all, just one result.

"I've never said that we were going to go through the season undefeated," said their coach John Monie. "We'll win a lot of battles this year, but some we won't win."

The club held a meeting to plan future recruitment this weekend, but that does not denote a panic over the current strength of the squad. Indeed, Monie has specifically ruled out the move for the St Helens booker, Keiron Cunningham, that has been rumoured for months.

Monie should limit his changes today to one that he was already considering before Wembley, going into the game with three rather than four props. On reflection, he feels that with two extra props on the bench none of his front rowers gets enough rugby to bring out his best.

You could argue that that showed through at Wembley. Terry O'Connor is the man likely to miss out, with the utility back Paul Johnson coming into the squad. It is a minor alteration, but Monie and Wigan will be looking for a major improvement.

Qatar finally allow women to compete

Athletics

THE Finnish javelin thrower, Mikaela Ingberg, launched a new era on Thursday when she became the first woman to compete in a professional sports event in the Gulf.

The 1995 world bronze medalist won her event at an international meeting in Doha, Qatar in which women were allowed to compete for the first time. "We weren't sure what to expect," Ingberg said. "When we came in to the stadium, we heard lots of whistles. We eventually realised that they were wolf whistles and that the Qatar people were glad to see us."

Nawal el Moutawakel, Bennis, of Morocco, the first Muslim woman to win an Olympic title, said the women competitors had received a warm welcome. "I am so relieved that it's all over," she said. "We were all very nervous about what sort of welcome the women would get here but it was very encouraging. It could have been very bad but on the whole everyone was understanding and very responsive."

The International Amateur Athletic Federation had told Qatari officials that their meeting would be granted Grand Prix status only if they allowed women to compete. In return Qatar introduced a dress code, ruling out skimpy clothing but allowing the women athletes to take part dressed in T-shirts, singlets, cycling shorts and track suit trousers.

A special family section was set aside for Qatari women but only a handful attended. Thousands of expatriate women were present, though, in the crowd of 20,000. "I think it's a great tournament and it's so good to see women taking part," said Olga Bravits, a Russian woman living in Qatar. "This will really make people sit up and take notice of Qatar and they will see that a Muslim nation can be progressive without losing sight of its culture and traditions."

On the track, the Olympic champion, Donovan Bailey, won the 100 metres while the Olympic 1500 metres champion, Noureddine Morceli, was beaten by Kenya's John Kibowen, the world cross country champion over four kilometres.

Scoreboard

Benson and Hedges Cup

One day

Leicestershire v Minor Counties

LEICESTERSHIRE: 382-6 (100 overs)

LEICESTERSHIRE won by 256 runs

LEICESTERSHIRE: 382-6 (100 overs)

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Scotland v Derbyshire

One day

Scotland v Derbyshire

SCOTLAND: 126-6 (100 overs)

SCOTLAND won by 256 runs

SCOTLAND: 126-6 (100 overs)

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Group A

One day

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Group B

One day

Leicestershire v Minor Counties

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Tetley's Bitter Cup final: Springbok inspiration could make the difference for Saracens. **Chris Hewett** reports

Capital rivals prepare for passion play

FRANÇOIS PIENAAR wins cup finals in the precisely the same way that Louis Luyt makes enemies: efficiently, single-mindedly and with astonishing frequency. He played no fewer than 19 of them back home in South Africa, all as captain, and lost only one. As the late Khech Christie said to his protégé before the 1995 World Cup final in Johannesburg: "Hey François, when we get this far, we don't lose, eh?" And no, the Springboks did not lose.

Pienaar will not captain Saracens in this afternoon's Tetley's Bitter Cup final at Twickenham; that honour goes to Tony Diprose, a concert pianist of a No 8 whose soft hands and cherubic features tend to conceal the fact that he too is a natural leader, his inspirational qualities fired in the flames of recent adversity. But the most celebrated Springbok of modern times will be

alongside him where it matters and as long as his dodgy hamstring permits him to remain there, Sarries will feel their name is on the trophy.

The competitive juices have been flowing at flood level all week for Pienaar does not subscribe to the theory that sporting journeys are more satisfying than sporting arrivals. When a silver pot is glinting away on the mountain top, the big flanker from the high veldt likes to get there without delay. "It's been a fruitful year for us but it can still come to nothing," he said this week. "It is Saracens' first cup final; for all our achievements, most of the guys do not know what it takes to be a winner. It is time they found out."

Lawrence Dallaglio has been making similar noises on behalf of a Wasps team who discovered the art of winning last season but then suffered a lengthy bout of amnesia:

"No one remembers the runners-up," he snarled. "When we last made the final in 1995, we regarded getting to Twickenham as an achievement in itself. Somehow, it was enough. It's not enough now."

"We've changed our perspective, raised our sights. Saracens have shown great character in taking the Premiership contest down to the wire without being able to put their best players on the field, but we also pride ourselves on our ability to look inside ourselves and produce something extra."

If the imminent collision of two supreme competitive spirits makes today's showpiece the most fascinating in years, it is vital that the game should realise its obvious promise; not just because English rugby is in need of a decent cup final - last year's Leicester-Sale affair was dismal beyond belief - but because the game in London

urgently requires a public relations pick-me-up. Passions are running at a record high across the traditional union heartlands but Saracens apart, the capital clubs have struggled to quicken the imagination and raid the pockets of the vast potential audience on their doorstep.

Disturbingly, Wasps had shifted only half of their 15,000 ticket allocation by Tuesday afternoon and although Twickenham officials remain confident of a sell-out, there is no doubt that Londoners have been slower than their provincial brethren in taking the professional game to heart. "This final is good for London," Dallaglio asserted. "It's our job to make it something to remember."

Whatever happens, rugby will remember the contributions of Michael Lynagh, the most prolific scorer in Test history, and Philippe Sella, the most

capped international of them all. Barrag injury, both will play in Saracens' final Premiership match on Thursday; Sella, indeed, aims to return to Twickenham in a fortnight to appear for one side or the other in the Sanyo Cup. To all intents and purposes, however, this is the grand farewell. It will be emotional in the extreme, their presence capturing the sympathy vote from the 50,000 neutrals in the stands.

Wasps have made a virtue of fronting up against the odds and they are probably the fresher, quicker outfit, regardless of their inexplicable decision to leave Paul Sampson on the bench. But Saracens possess the best front five in England and a half-back pairing of consummate class. If their walking wounded make it all the way to the final whistle, one half of the double will surely be done and dusted.

SARACENS v WASPS			
at Twickenham			
G Johnson	15	G Rees	
R Constable	14	S Roiser	
P Sella	13	M Denney	
S Ravenscroft	12	R Henderson	
B Daniel	11	L Scrase	
M Lynagh	10	A King	
K Bracken	9	M Friday	
R Grau	8	D Molloy	
G Chuter	7	S Mitchell	
P Wallace	6	W Green	
P Johns	5	M Weedon	
D Grewcock	4	S Shaw	
B Sturman	3	J Worsley	
F Pienaar	2	P Volley	
A Diprose, capt	1	L Dallaglio, capt	

Replacements: 16 M Singer; 17 R Wallace; 18 A Lee; 19 M O'Leary; 20 A Bennett; 21 A O'Leary; 22 G Bottomman.

Replacements: 16 P Sampson; 17 A Gomersall; 18 M White; 19 A Reed; 20 I Dunston; 21 A Black; 22 T Leota.

Referee: C White (Cheltenham) Kick-off: 3pm (Sky Sports 2)

Big game occupying Johnson's thoughts

Saracens' South African full-back may make a decision to retire after the club's attempt on the double. **Chris Hewett** talked to him

IF Gavin Johnson was once a model of uncertainty, he is no longer quite so sure of himself. Saracens' imposing South African full-back agonised long and hard before throwing in his lot with the north Londoners and spent much of this season doubting whether his rebellious body would allow him to play more than a walk-on part in his club's courageous challenge for a first professional league and cup double. Now that he is playing, he is in two minds as to whether he should continue doing so. Truly, his decision is final.

Under the circumstances, it is a minor miracle that he should have pulled off the most decisive tackle of the season to date; an inspirational flash of defensive brilliance that may yet win Saracens the Allied Dunbar Premiership. "Yes, that was an important tackle," he says, recalling the last minute - nay, last second - corner-flagging hit that denied Jamie Williams, his Harlequins opposite number, what would have been a match-winning and Premiership-deciding try at The Stoop 10 days ago. "I'm quite proud of that one."

It is perfectly conceivable, likely even, that Johnson has only two games of big-time rugby left to him. A lifelong fisherman and passionate wildlife enthusiast, he has a 40-kilometre stretch of virgin Zambian game reserve waiting for him the moment he retires and he is currently weighing the obvious attractions of a Hemingwayesque life in the Upper Zambezi against the prospect of another season of tough Premiership activity in lower Watford. Well, what would you do?

Less than a month ago, Johnson's mind was uncharac-

teristically close to being made up; after Saracens' outstanding semi-final victory at Northampton, the guarded and very private Springbok from the Transvaal quietly let it be known that he would leave England at the end of the season and take over the management of his Zambian business interests in person. At which point, the Sarries management asked him to reconsider. He has been chewing the fat ever since.

"It's 95 per cent certain that I'll go back to Africa," he said this week. "The game reserve is upstream of Victoria Falls; remote, untouched and extremely beautiful. We have hippo and crocodile, outstanding fishing and wonderful bird life. It's a dream, really. I've always had a serious love affair with the bush, with wild Africa, and the chance to combine that passion with a business venture of huge potential excites me."

"Having said that, the reserve is in dependable hands at the moment and there is no good business reason why it shouldn't stay that way for another season. I have another year on my Saracens contract and while they're happy to release me if I decide to go, they've asked me to consider staying on. Six months ago, I wouldn't have given it a second thought. Now, though, I'm enjoying my rugby so much that it's a possibility."

Johnson was born into South African farming stock 31 years ago, played three Currie Cup finals with Transvaal and emerged as a serious Test challenger to Andre Joubert, the Rolls-Royce of Springbok full-backs. He made three appearances in Francois Pienaar's triumphant 1995 World Cup-

winning campaign; indeed, he confronted Gareth Rees, the Canadian Wasp who opposes him today, in what became known as the Battle of Boet Erasmus. Neither went the distance; Johnson withdrew with concussion while Rees was sent off for trying to concuss everyone else.

It was Pienaar, now Saracens' player-coach, who first planted the seeds of an English sojourn in Johnson's mind. "He was looking for a full-back and thought of me. I gave him an adamant 'no way' at first but he talked me round. I'd signed a three-year contract with the South African union, but Louis Luyt obliged by releasing me early and the next thing I knew, I was here in London."

"I'd been in the British Isles before - I played for Blackrock College in Ireland for six months - but I don't suppose for a moment that I'd have come back had it not been Francois' idea. His leadership of the Springboks was quite outstanding and if anything, his abilities are even greater now. He always makes you feel that victory is possible, that you can achieve the ultimate on a rugby field, and his impact here at Saracens has been something else."

Frustratingly, any early impact Johnson might have made was blunted by injury. Saracens knew he was a high-quality marksman and an extraordinarily accomplished kicker out of hand - the best in the Premiership, perhaps - but try as their physios might, they could not get him on to the pitch. Even now, he has played only 11 Premiership games for the title challengers and two of those were at the far end of last season.

"There were two separate

problems with my hamstring and my left knee went as well," he said. "I couldn't seem to get myself fit and I ended up feeling pretty negative about things. I came to the conclusion that I'd had enough of rugby and should start thinking about my future outside the game. But the club were very supportive and full of encouragement and in recent weeks, my body has started to behave and I've loved every minute of it."

"Whatever I decide to do - and I'll be speaking to the club next week - I feel very privileged to be playing in an English cup final. I've been fortunate enough to have experienced my fair share of special occasions; Currie Cup finals in South Africa generate fantastic interest and even though I played only seven Tests, one was against New Zealand and another against Western Samoa in a very emotional World Cup quarter-final. Twickenham has a tradition of its own, though, and I'm honoured to be involved in this match."

Saracens freely admit that Johnson will be difficult to replace, especially now that they have abandoned any thought of shelling out mega-bucks for Tim Stimpson, the disaffected Test Lion from Newcastle. "It's up to Gavin, but he knows how highly we rate him," said Mark Evans, the director of rugby, this week. "You've seen something approaching the best of him in recent weeks and when he plays at that level, he's the Real McCoy."

Evans can rest assured that for today, at least, his prize full-back is more concerned with the big game at Twickenham than the big game back home. After that, who knows? Certainly not Johnson.



Johnson's talent will be difficult to replace at Saracens

Photograph: Allsport

Kucera leaves mark on Muster

Tennis

KAROL KUCERA, the sixth seed, overcame a tentative opening before finding his rhythm against Thomas Muster to breeze into the semi-finals of the German Open in Hamburg yesterday.

Kucera won 6-2, 6-3 after coming back from a break down in the first set, before embarking on a run that saw him take the next nine games and jump into a 4-0 lead in the second set. The 24-year-old Slovak, who is ranked No. 10 in the world, rediscovered his ground strokes, peppering the lines with powerful shots and then frustrating Muster by changing his options with clever drop shots.

Kucera's semi-final opponent will be the Spanish clay court specialist Albert Costa, who beat Fabrice Santoro of France 6-3, 6-4. For Costa, the world No 26, it will be his first semi-final of the year.

Muster, who was briefly ranked world No 1 in 1996, leads the tour with 40 tournament titles on clay, but he has not won on the surface in 18 months and the Austrian has slipped to No 25.

The turning point came in the sixth game, when the two players exchanged a spectacular series of diagonal drop shots. The rally ended with Muster hitting the net, Kucera went on to break Muster's serve and the Austrian never got back into the match.

"Once he takes over, he can put a lot of pressure on you and wrong-foot you," Muster said. "He played a lot of top spin and kept me far behind the baseline."

The German Open represents one of the major form guides for the French Open, the second Grand Slam event of the year which starts on 25 May. "I wouldn't say I am one of the favourites," Kucera said, "but if I am fit enough and I keep playing this well, sure I could win the French Open."

Results, Digest, page 20

Black's dressage delight

Equestrianism

By Genevieve Murphy
at Badminton

STUART BLACK, the sole Canadian competing at the Badminton Horse Trials, rode Market Venture to one of the best dressage tests ever seen in three-day eventing when he took the lead here yesterday.

The 12-year-old horse (bred in England, as was his rider who comes from Macclesfield) produced a wonderfully soft and fluent test, which included two perfect flying changes.

Black now leads from two riders sharing second place: New Zealand's Mark Todd on Broadcast News, with whom he won last year's European Open title, and Owen Moore, at present the best of the home riders on his newly acquired mount, Lightfoot. Chris Bartle, who trains the British event team for dressage (and has recently helped Moore in that capacity) is fourth on Word Perfect II.

Black, who moved to Canada in 1977 at the age of 17, has had recent disappointments. Last year, when he was due to compete here for the first time, Market Venture was found to have an abscess the day before the horse inspection and had to be withdrawn.

This year, Black and his mount arrived in England two and a half weeks before Badminton "in case anything went wrong again". The horse took the plane journey and everything else in his stride, so much so that the charged atmosphere is a positive help in the dressage arena. "It picks him up and brings out a bit of flair," Black said.

The standard of dressage was higher than on Thursday and overnight leader, Daisy Dick, had slipped to 12th by the time this phase was completed. Results, Digest, page 20

Metcalfe takes centre stage

By Bryn Palmer

THE Glasgow Hawks full-back Glenn Metcalfe will take centre stage at Murrayfield today as the Second Division champions aim to cap a remarkable first season with a Tennents Velvet Cup triumph over Kelso.

But it surely will not be the last time the New Zealander enjoys top billing at the national stadium as a first Scotland cap beckons ever closer with each new try. The 26-year-old former Waikato provincial player could achieve that goal when he returns to the southern hemisphere as part of the tour party heading for Fiji and Australia later this month.

Before that, however, lies the challenge of helping the Hawks soar to even greater heights. Runaway winners of their own division with weeks to spare and having already comfortably dis-

posed of three Premiership One sides en-route to the final, they will start as firm favourites against Adam Roxburgh's Border raiders.

But Metcalfe, despite his obvious self-belief, is wary of raising expectations too high: "We have scored some nice tries this season and won games well, but it is a totally different ball game going into a final like this," he said. "I played a couple of games at Murrayfield two years ago in the district championship... but this will be the biggest game I have played at club level for the Hawks."

Not least, he admits, because of the departure of no less than seven of the Hawks side, plus three of Kelso's, to the Scottish Rugby Union's two new "super districts" next season. "It's a shame really that it's probably the last time we'll play together as a team," Metcalfe added. "We

have done so well in our first season and, right from day one, we have played for each other."

The Hawks have won through to the Murrayfield stage on the back of victories over Watsonians and Boroughmuir in the two previous rounds, but Kelso, meanwhile, have already done superbly to get this far, having also accounted for Premiership One opposition in their last three ties.

For the coach, Bruce Rutherford, who has also steered the club to the brink of the top flight via next Saturday's play-off decider against Heriot's FP, the cup run has been a welcome bonus: "I would rather win the one the following week to be honest - that is the one we have been working all season for," he admitted. "But now that we are there, we will go out to give it our best shot before thinking about Heriot's."

By Chris Hewett

AT LONG last, a vote for common sense. England's warring factions kissed and made up yesterday after two long years of bloody civil conflict and although a handful of hard-line extremists will undoubtedly head for the mountains to plot their revenge, the domestic game can finally start celebrating peace in its time.

Both the Rugby Football Union council and its management board gave overwhelming support to a wide-ranging, seven-year agreement hammered out by the rival negotiating teams led by Graham Smith, the RFU member for Kent, and Tom Walkinshaw, the Formula One team owner who has a majority share in Gloucester.

"The deal underpins the efforts of the England team while

recognising the club-based nature of rugby in this country," said Smith. "We went in with a positive attitude and while it's fair to say that we've had our moments of discord, we've come out with a positive agreement."

As expected, England's Premiership clubs will boycott next year's Heineken Cup. The Allied Dunbar top flight will accommodate 14 teams next season and professional players will operate under standard contracts featuring built-in release dates for international rugby - a move certain to infuriate Cliff Brittle, the marginalised RFU chairman, and his major ally, Fran Cotton, who has already set the wheels in motion for a special general meeting in the summer.

Cotton will be positively apoplectic at the RFU's decision to turn its back on provincial

rugby, the resurrection of which he has turned into a crusade. He will almost certainly claim that the clubs have won to the detriment of rugby worldwide.

However, the clubs have made significant concessions on key issues. Full England players - that is to say, those involved in Test squads - will play no more than 37 games a season and to that end, Premiership rugby will be played on or around international weekends. Never before have the clubs accepted the principle of playing important games without their leading lights.

"We've also ensured that there will be no Premiership closed shop; there will always be promotion and relegation," said Smith, whose quiet and restrained approach made him a key figure in the wheeling and dealing. Next season, Bedford

and West Hartlepool will join the elite while London Scottish and Rotherham will accompany them if they triumph in their respective play-off matches with Bristol and London Irish.

Crucially, the clubs have agreed to make the deal unchallengeable for seven years. Even if the European Commission comes down in favour of the clubs' application on constitutional and commercial rights this autumn, its findings will not be brought to bear on the running of the domestic game.

Smith and his colleagues must now sell the deal to a hostile and reactionary International Rugby Board in Dublin on 18 May. Until then, the 12 clubs who make up the existing Premiership top flight remain banned, albeit controversially, from playing contact with any side outside of England.

Redknapp ready to serve club and country

Football

By Paul Walker

JAMIE REDKNAPP will sign a new five-year contract with Liverpool next week – and tell Glenn Hoddle that he is fit for England World Cup duty.

The Liverpool manager, Roy Evans, will also sit down next week for contract talks with Steve McManaman in an attempt to end the saga over whether the winger will stay when his current deal runs out at the end of next season.

Redknapp is a week away from full fitness after struggling with a knee injury since the draw at Coventry last month, and will be absent again at Derby on Sunday in Liverpool's final

game of the season. He said: "My contract is all sorted out and I expect to sign it on Monday. As far as playing again is concerned, I'm not quite ready yet and would probably be OK if we had a game next Saturday. But as far as England is concerned, I will be fully fit for the World Cup."

As for McManaman, he can leave on a free transfer next summer under the Bosman ruling. Liverpool want to know his thinking – whether he stays or goes – as soon as possible.

Liverpool are one of several clubs to be linked with Tottenham's England defender Sol Campbell – but Spurs are determined to hang on to him and their other young players. In a press statement yesterday the

White Hart Lane club said: "Despite the release of several players under the Bosman ruling – Jürgen Klinsmann, Gary Mabbutt, David Howells, Dean Austin and Danny Hill – David Platt [the club's director of football] has insisted that, whatever attention younger talent like Sol Campbell, Steffen Iversen and Espen Baardens may attract, they are not for sale."

"Only players who are not part of the future planning of the club will be considered for transfer trading. These could include José Domínguez and Justin Edinburgh. Frode Grodas is also likely to be allowed to leave and is currently the subject of a transfer inquiry."

Manchester City are optimistic that they may soon complete Georgi Kinkladze's transfer to Ajax – even though a fee for the Georgian has still not been agreed.

Bradford City have confirmed Paul Jewell as their manager, with a two-year contract. He has spent 10 years at Valley Parade as player, coach and then caretaker manager since Chris Kamara's departure during the season. His assistant will be Chris Hutchings, whose position has also been changed from temporary to permanent.

Fifa has declared its executive committee is ready to discuss banning Wimbledon's possible move to Ireland. Football's world governing body announced in Zurich yesterday that it is set to consider the matter along with several other points at its 8 June congress in Paris – two days before the World Cup finals begin.

It is keen to forbid any club from moving to another country while still playing in their former country's league and cup competitions, unless there are exceptional circumstances. Wimbledon have tentative plans to build a 40,000 seater stadium just outside Dublin.

Chelsea and Stuttgart caught in quandary over Uefa Cup

CHELSEA are set to defend the Cup-Winners' Cup next season if they lift the trophy on Wednesday – despite hints that they could opt out. That means Blackburn, Leicester, West Ham, Aston Villa or Derby could sneak into Europe after all – even if they finish outside the Premiership top six.

The suggestion that Gianluca Vialli's side could take part in the Uefa Cup even if they beat VfB Stuttgart in next week's Stockholm final came after senior officials of Uefa, European football's governing body, faxed the German club. Like Chelsea, who are Coca-Cola Cup winners and likely to finish fourth in the Premiership, Stuttgart – poised to earn a top-six Bundesliga spot – will also earn a place in the Uefa Cup.

The correspondence from Uefa suggested that Stuttgart would be given the option of choosing which competition to play in, an offer which would

also be made to Chelsea if they triumphed in the Rasunda Stadium. With the Uefa Cup containing an extra money-spinning round, Stuttgart's president, Gerhard Mayer-Vorfelder, had been reported to be asking Bundesliga rivals to chip in money to compensate his club for playing in the Cup-Winners' Cup instead.

Confusion reigned at Uefa's Swiss headquarters yesterday, with different officials sending divergent signals over what the regulations stated. If Chelsea do win, and defend the trophy, it would open up an extra Uefa Cup spot for the club finishing seventh in the Premiership.

Chelsea's managing director, Colin Hutchinson, said: "The evidence of everything we've heard from them is that we would be required to defend the Cup-Winners' Cup, because Uefa ranks it second only to the Champions' League in importance."

Rangers left to hope Old Firm rivals blow last chance

By Phil Gordon

JONATHAN GOULD has kept a low profile all season, so the Celtic goalkeeper has to be listened to when he claims Rangers are dabbling in a flight of fancy.

The Scottish champions have tried to turn up the psychological pressure on the other half of the Old Firm by ensuring a helicopter is kept on stand-by today to whisk them back to Glasgow if they beat Dundee United and Celtic lose, a combination of results which would present Rangers with a record 10th title in a row.

Ibrox is playing host to 32,000 fans watching events from Tannadice unfold on giant screens and one-upmanship has enticed them into their bold aerial gesture.

However, Gould, whose meagre total of just 24 goals conceded has played a crucial part in Celtic being in the brink of their first title since 1988, be-

lieves that a victory for the Premier Division leaders against St Johnstone at Parkhead will bring their eternal rivals crashing back to earth.

"You have to be very careful when you do things like this," bristled Gould, leaving no doubt that it has supplied extra motivation, if any more were needed. "Put it this way, I would be pretty disappointed if I didn't have a championship medal by Saturday night."

More than 52,000 fans will pack Parkhead to see if Wm Jansen's team can protect their two-point advantage over Rangers. The Dutch coach remains unfazed by all the hype, saying: "We know what we have to do. We don't have to rely on anyone else, only ourselves."

Rangers believed their championship ambitions were dead after they lost to Kilmarnock last week until Dunfermline offered them a reprieve 24 hours later.

Now they are desperate to take advantage.

Walter Smith has a string of injury problems for his final league match in charge of the club, including Jonas Thern and Andy Gorm who have hamstring injuries. Smith said: "Celtic have the destiny of the title in their hands. But this has been a strange season. All we can hope for is a result and await the outcome of Celtic's game."

Kilmarnock will clinch the last remaining Uefa cup place if they defeat Hibernia at home and finish in fourth place. But St Johnstone, who are a point behind, have plenty of incentive to spoil the Parkhead party and replace it with one of their own. Hearts, already assured of a place in Europe, will rest some players ahead of next week's Scottish Cup final, for their home match with Dunfermline, while Motherwell will bring down the curtain at home to Aberdeen.



Graeme Sharp: On the verge of an unlikely success at the helm of Bangor City

Photograph: Iolo Williams

Sharp eyes European return

If Bangor City beat Connah's Quay tomorrow, a former Everton striker will make it back to the Cup-Winners' Cup. Alan Nixon reports

GRAEME SHARP'S away trips are at the likes of Anglesey not Anfield these days, but those roads may lead to Europe both for him and Bangor City. Sharp has waited an unlucky 13 years for his chance to return to the European Cup-Winners' Cup since Everton's triumph in Rotterdam. Now he is manager of Bangor he has that unexpected opportunity presented by the Welsh Cup final against Connah's Quay tomorrow.

The Scottish striker who was once the key to Everton's team of the Eighties has taken the north-Wales side to the brink of Europe in his first year in charge. He hopes it will also be a passport back to the public eye for him.

Sharp took on the challenge following his departure as Oldham's manager. He was on the sidelines and on the Northrop Manor golf course, where he lives. As he looked out on to those fairways he admitted: "It would have been the easiest thing in the world to walk away and spend my time out there every day. But I've been in the game since I was a kid and I didn't want to let go."

"It was through a neighbour, Ken Jones, that I got into Bangor City. He owns a few garages and is the club's main sponsor. He was always on at me to watch them and one day asked if I would like to help their manager at the time, Kevin Langley. I said OK, as

long as it wasn't stepping on his toes. He didn't get back to me.

"The next thing I knew Ken offered me the job a few weeks later. I said no at first and told him I wanted to get back into the League, but he kept on and they came up with a good package for me. I took it last summer, but on the one condition that if a League job came up I was free to leave."

After a career spanning over 15 years at the top Sharp suddenly found himself taking charge of a part-time club at a level he knew nothing about. He said: "I went into the job completely blind. I needed an assistant who knew the scene and they came up with a lad called John Holse, who was a boss in his own right and a big Evertonian so we hit it off immediately."

"I found it hard at times dealing with part-time players who have jobs and you only see them for an hour or so for training a couple of days a week on an artificial pitch. Lads would miss out through their work and it was different to everything I had been used to, a day-to-day professional atmosphere."

"These are a good bunch of guys and keen to succeed. They only miss games if they really can't avoid it, but it causes

problems all the same. One of our strikers pulled out at an hour's notice the other week and I even had to put the boots back on and sit on the bench."

Yet Sharp's culture shock was one that has kept his enthusiasm alive. He said: "I've been to parts of Wales I never knew existed. Haverfordwest feels like the other end of the world. It's our one overnight trip of the season. We can't afford any others. But everywhere you go the people are genuine football fans."

"There is a lot of feeling for the game among them even if the crowds are small. I'm pleased we've reached the Cup final to reward our fans. I hope we can bring them some glory and make the European Cup-Winners' Cup. It would be a dream to get a Scottish or English team in the first round, but knowing our luck we'll be going to the Ukraine."

Ironically Sharp has been exiled from Europe since Everton won the final in 1985. Because of the English clubs' ban after Heysel, Everton could not continue at that level and then came their recent decline. Sharp said: "It would be good for me to go back to Europe, but it's better for the club. I've been there, the lads in the team have never known

anything like this and the fans could get a great trip out of it.

"Hopefully, someone will see that I have something to offer as a boss out of this. I think my record at Oldham is better than you would imagine. I kept them up in the first season and left them higher than Joe Royle had done when he went. We stayed up the year after and I think I would have done it again if I had not quit."

"I wanted the job, but the first thing I was told was to move out eight top players. A year later I had to cut again. Then they told me I could only sign free transfer men and I couldn't offer them signing-on fees. I felt I was being made a scapegoat for people behind the scenes who made the decisions."

"In the end I had to go. Oldham's ambitions did not match up to mine. Instead of being strong as a club and being honest with the fans it was all coming down on me. It was an alarming experience and I definitely want to get back in as a manager, assistant or coach. I just want people to look at the whole Oldham picture."

Sharp is waiting for that call while honing his skills on the golf course in the summer months. He said: "Even now I've got a dream lifestyle... I see a lot more of the family too, but after being in football all my life I long for the day when I have that involvement again."

Quinn set to make play-off return

By Ian Rodgers

SUNDERLAND were left despondent by the events of last week – but midfielder Lee Clark is determined his side will not miss the play-off boat.

Middlesbrough snatched the second automatic promotion place when they beat Oxford United 4-1 and now the Wear-siders must lift themselves for tomorrow's semi-final first-leg against Sheffield United at Bramall Lane.

"We are all geared up to the Premiership and must make certain that we take our second chance and make that final step," Clark said. "It really hit us hard, and we suffered from a painful hangover for a couple of days, but after getting back to training we soon put that behind us as we prepared for this weekend's game. It was a little flat earlier in the week but the lads have worked ever so hard and are determined to give the fans promotion."

Niall Quinn is close to fitness after a hamstring injury but the Sunderland manager, Peter Reid, may rest him for the second leg at the Stadium of Light on Wednesday.

The Sheffield United striker, Dean Saunders, is looking to history repeating itself as the South Yorkshire side aim for the Premiership for the first time since 1994. "Last season the guys were gutted because they lost the final with the last kick of the game at Wembley," Saunders said. "But recently the sixth-placed team is the one that gets promotion."

Sheffield United could be without their striker Graham Stuart after the former Everton man broke two bones in his hand. The United manager, Steve Thompson, will make a late decision on his inclusion.

Ipswich are hoping that they can go one better than last season when they were beaten in the semi-final by Sheffield United, but their manager, George Burley, wants to repeat his 1978 FA Cup final appearance as a player.

"Any supporter too young to have seen the club in the FA Cup at Wembley in 1978 will be anxious for the opportunity to see us back there again," Burley said. "We have two difficult games to negotiate before then, of course, and none of us have forgotten the disappointment of what happened at this stage last season. Hopefully the experience of losing out to Sheffield United on the away goals will stand us in good stead."

The Ipswich captain, Tony Mowbray (groin), central defender Adam Tanner (knee) are missing and striker Richard Naylor begins a three-match suspension.

The Charlton manager, Alan Curbishley, is aiming to prove the bookmakers wrong at Portman Road. Charlton are rated only third favourites to go up, but Curbishley believes his side have a good chance. "Ipswich and ourselves are too evenly matched teams, very similar in size of club and stature and also very similar in style. I feel that both legs are winnable," Curbishley said.

Sporting Digest

Dalton stretches the pack

Sailing
THE lead pair of Grant Dalton in Merit Cup and Paul Standbridge in Toshiba were stretching away from the chasing pack yesterday as both the temperature and the wind dropped on the eighth leg of the Whitbread race from Annapolis to La Rochelle, writes Stuart Alexander.

Over 90 miles covered the first-placed Dalton to last-

placed John Kostecki in Chesie Racing.

Still enjoying a successful leg is the all-woman crew of EF Education, holding fourth position behind Kazuo Frostad's Innovation Kvaerner and positively relishing the opportunity of sighting an iceberg. Overall leader Paul Cayard was languishing unhappily 38 miles behind Merit in sixth place.

Bailu in alcohol clinic

Ice skating
OKSANA BAIUL, the 1994 Olympic women's figure skating champion, has entered a rehabilitation clinic to treat a chronic alcohol problem, a spokesman has said.

Bailu, the 21-year-old Ukrainian, agreed to seek treatment last week, according to a spokesman for her New York publicity agency.

Athletics
DOHA GRAND PRIX (Qatar) Winners: Men 100m: D Bailey (Can) 12.07sec; 200m: A Smith (USA) 24.85sec; 400m: M McDonald (Jama) 48.22sec; 800m: J Baskin (GB) 1:50.00; 1600m: M Bennett (GB) 4:02.00; 3200m: J Baskin (GB) 8:00.00; 6400m: J Baskin (GB) 16:00.00; 12800m: J Baskin (GB) 32:00.00; 25600m: J Baskin (GB) 64:00.00; 51200m: J Baskin (GB) 128:00.00; 102400m: J Baskin (GB) 256:00.00; 204800m: J Baskin (GB) 512:00.00; 409600m: J Baskin (GB) 1024:00.00; 819200m: J Baskin (GB) 2048:00.00; 1638400m: J Baskin (GB) 4096:00.00; 3276800m: J Baskin (GB) 8192:00.00; 6553600m: J Baskin (GB) 16384:00.00; 13107200m: J Baskin (GB) 32768:00.00; 26214400m: J Baskin (GB) 65536:00.00; 52428800m: J Baskin (GB) 131072:00.00; 104857600m: J Baskin (GB) 262144:00.00; 209715200m: J Baskin (GB) 524288:00.00; 419430400m: J Baskin (GB) 1048576:00.00; 838860800m: J Baskin (GB) 2097152:00.00; 1677721600m: J Baskin (GB) 4194304:00.00; 3355443200m: J Baskin (GB) 8388608:00.00; 6710886400m: J Baskin (GB) 16777216:00.00; 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Everton circus faces the Big Drop

The legacy of a power struggle at Goodison has sapped the team's ability to compete. Glenn Moore on the slide of a great club

THOSE Everton fans who watched enviously as Arsenal, having humiliated their team, carried the Premiership trophy around Highbury last week will be able to savour their own silverware parade at Goodison Park tomorrow.

But while a championship trophy and a cup will be on display, the afternoon is more likely to end in a mournful wake than a celebratory party as their club tries to avoid a unique treble.

Last month Everton ladies won the Women's Premier League, on Thursday the teenagers won the FA Youth Cup. Tomorrow the first team are favourites to be relegated from the top division for the first time in 47 years. Founder members of the League, champions in seven different decades and nine times in all, Everton have only missed four top-flight seasons in 110 years. Should they go down they will be the biggest name to be relegated since Manchester United in 1974.

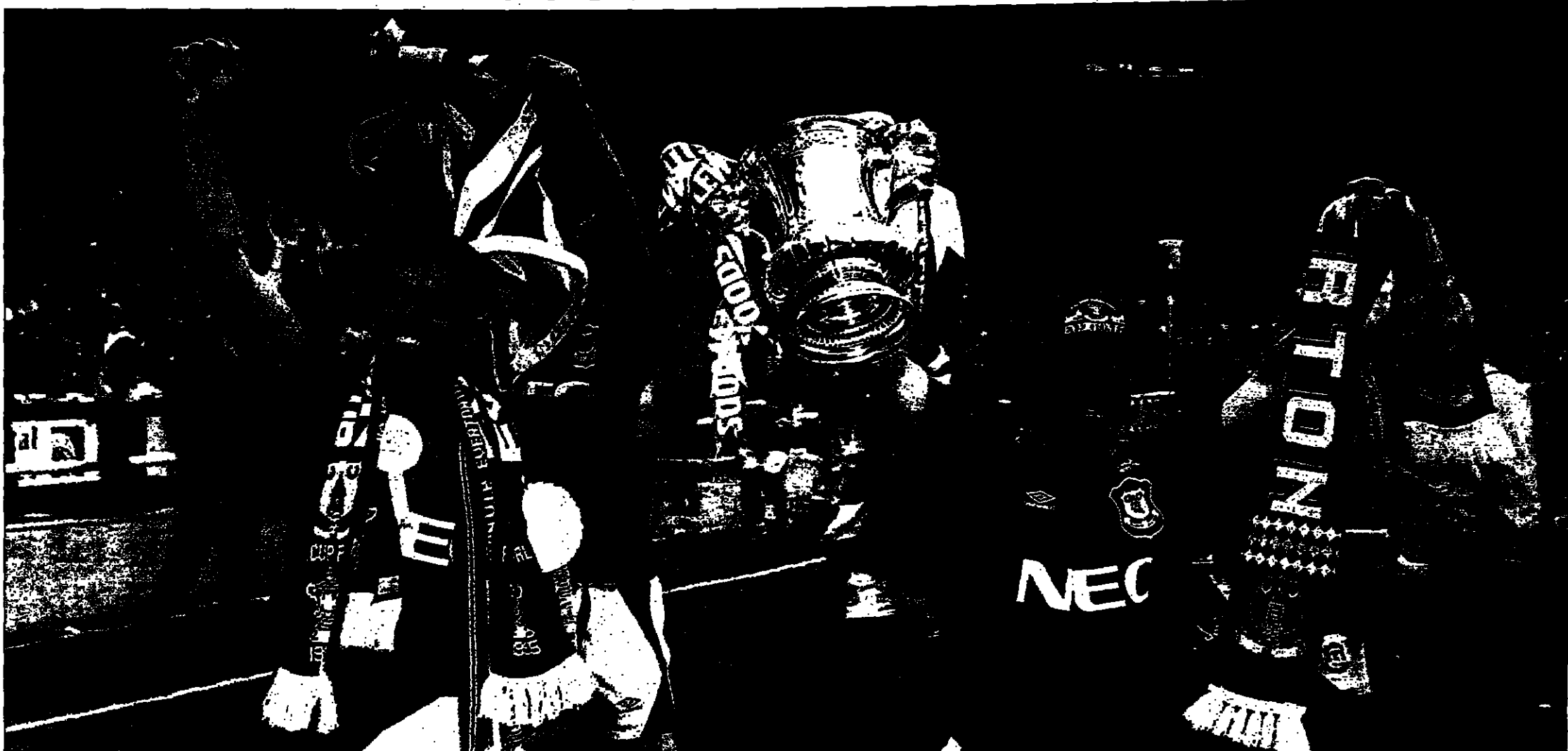
To avoid the drop they need to gain a point more against Coventry at Goodison than Bolton Wanderers can achieve against Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. That might seem feasible but take into account Chelsea's preoccupation with their European Cup-Winners' Cup final, and Everton's vulnerability against the sort of pace Darren Huckerby has in abundance, and next season's local derby will probably be against Tranmere rather than Liverpool.

There was the usual talk, at Everton's suburban training ground this week, about "fighting to the last", but the mood is subdued rather than bullish reflecting the defeatism prevalent on the blue half of Merseyside. Though the team will still run out to the theme from Z Cars another bygone anthem, Abba's "SOS", would be more appropriate.

The fans, though turning up in impressive numbers, are in despair. Six years of near-continual struggle has worn them down as it has the team. Some wonder whether relegation might prove a springboard for a new start but more look at the many parallels at Manchester City and fear a loss of status could be terminal.

Like City, who also have a dominant neighbour, Everton have endured boardroom and management upheaval resulting in a lack of direction. Many of the problems stem from the post-Heyes ban on English clubs. As domestic champions and European Cup-Winners' Cup holders in 1985 Everton fancied their chances in the European Cup. Instead Howard Kendall, frustrated at being unable to test himself abroad, soon left for Spain. Gary Lineker followed. Trevor Steven and Gary Stevens went to Rangers and the team broke up.

The 1987 title was their last League success and, by 1992, the club was fighting relegation. The Moores family, long the guiding influence, decided to sell their controlling stake in the club precipitating a lengthy power struggle between Peter Johnson, a local foodstuffs millionaire, chairman of Tranmere and former Liverpool season ticket-holder, and Bill Kenwright, the West End theatre impresario and lifelong Evertonian. Kenwright was the fans' choice, Johnson had the money. Eventually they did a deal with Johnson, for £20m, becoming chairman and ma-



Ups and downs: Paul Rideout (left, immediately above) and Joe Parkinson hold FA Cup after 1995 defeat of Manchester United; (top left) Howard Kendall (in grey suit) watches his side's 4-0 humiliation at Highbury last Sunday; (top right, left to right) Michael Ball, Slaven Bilic and Nick Barmby have that sinking feeling in the 3-1 home defeat to Sheffield Wednesday on 25 April. Photographs: Empics

majority shareholder and Kenwright staying on the board.

Initially this seemed to work. Johnson provided the finance to sign the likes of Daniel Amokachi and Duncan Ferguson and, after the popular Joe Royle replaced Mike Walker, Everton won the FA Cup. Further investment brought in Andrei Kanchelskis, Nick Barmby and Gary Speed but the team failed to gel. Royle fell out with the local media and, after Johnson refused to add to the huge transfer deficit by signing Tore Andre Flo, Royle jumped.

Dave Watson steered the team to safety as player/caretaker manager and the summer opened with Johnson promising big names. Slaven Bilic arrived but no player of note joined him while Kendall returned for his third spell as manager only after Johnson suffered a series of rejections elsewhere.

By now Johnson, having spent nearly £40m on transfers in four years, had tired of putting money into the club. As his proposal to move from Goodison to an out-of-town site met vociferous and informed opposition he became a tax exile on Jer-

sey where he contemplates cashing in on his investment - worth an estimated £60-£70m.

Johnson's public utterances are now rare, his opposition to the signing of John Spencer - after the player had undergone heart surgery to prove his fitness - being an uncommon revelation. Kendall, whose last spell at Goodison ended when the board refused to sanction a £1.5m bid for Dion Dublin, got his way over Spencer but he has still spent barely £11m in signing 13 players, most from the Nationwide or Central

Leagues. With nine players departing he has even made a small profit.

The turnover - of 18 players signed by Walker and Royle only three are in the team - means this is largely Kendall's side but the weaknesses of last year, a lack of pace in defence, gulf in midfield and goals in attack, are yet to be solved. Instability has not helped - he has used 34 players - nor have problems with the senior men: Ferguson has played with an injury for months and, while still a handful, understandably lacks

sharpness; Bilic has been sent off three times; Barmby has been fitful.

More than 15,000 turned up at Goodison this week to clutch at the strands of hope provided by the youth team but Everton do not have a good record of bringing on young players. Their last FA Youth Cup winning side, in 1984, had a negligible impact, making only 22 Everton appearances between them. Only Ian Marshall, now at Leicester, went on to forge a decent career. More recently none of several promising players have established

themselves: John Ebbrell and Jon O'Connor have already been sold while Tony Grant and Michael Branch have been unable to gain a regular first-team place.

The new generation, led by Michael Ball, Gavin McCann, Richard Dunne and Danny Cadamarteri, look good; but it is easier to bed into a winning team than a losing one. Last week, after the home defeat to Sheffield Wednesday which, together with Bolton's win at Aston Villa, plunged the club towards relegation, Kendall pointedly criticised the lack of help the older players gave the youngsters.

Many fans have now lost faith in Kendall but, because of the enormous goodwill for his past deeds as player and manager, the bulk of their ire is aimed at Johnson. There were further demonstrations against him after Thursday's match and he will be given a four-man police guard from his Wirral home to Goodison - where precautions include removing the brass name plate identifying his office.

Johnson has never been forgiven his Liverpool links and banners like

the one at Anfield on Wednesday - "Agent Johnson: Mission accomplished" - do not help. Due to the unique relationship between Merseyside fans, an element of the Liverpool support would like to see Everton survive. But that did not stop chants of "come on Bolton" and "going down" on Wednesday.

The team have been given impressive support though the anger some fans showed at Highbury, when the players waved distantly at the travelling support rather than going across to them, suggests that, too, is fragile.

Everton had plenty of spirit at Highbury but not the cohesion and ability to match. Coventry, so often cast in Everton's position on final day, have the beating of them, as they showed in thrashing them 4-1 in the Coca-Cola Cup earlier this season.

After that match Kendall, appalled at their lack of pride in his beloved club, argued with his players on the pitch. Everton went on to defeat Liverpool in their next match. The recriminations will be just as bitter if they fail tomorrow but atonement will not be so close at hand.

Singing the Blues: Everton's decline

1986-87: P42, Pts 88, Pos 1st FA Cup: Fifth round. League (Littlewoods) Cup: Fifth round.	1990-91: P38, Pts 51, Pos 9th FA Cup: Sixth round. League Cup: Third round.	1994-95: P42, Pts 50, Pos 15th FA Cup: Winners. Coca-Cola Cup: Second round.
1987-88: P40, Pts 70, Pos 4th FA Cup: Fifth round. League (Littlewoods) Cup: Semi-finals.	1991-92: P42, Pts 53, Pos 12th FA Cup: Fourth round. League Cup: Fourth round.	1995-96: P38, Pts 6, Pos 6th FA Cup: Fourth round. Coca-Cola Cup: Second round. Cup-Winners' Cup: Second round.
1988-89: P38, Pts 54, Pos 8th FA Cup: Runners-up. League (Littlewoods) Cup: Fourth round.	1992-93: P42, Pts 53, Pos 13th FA Cup: Third round. League Cup: Fourth round.	1996-97: P38, Pts 42, Pos 15th FA Cup: Fourth round. Coca-Cola Cup: Second round.
1989-90: P38, Pts 53, Pos 6th FA Cup: Fifth round. League (Littlewoods) Cup: Fourth round.	1993-94: P42, Pts 44, Pos 17th FA Cup: Third round. Coca-Cola Cup: Fourth round.	1997-98 (to date): P37, Pts 39, Pos 18th FA Cup: Third round. Coca-Cola Cup: Third round.

'Jiminho' ready for another day of reckoning

IF A WEEK is a long time in politics then a decade in football is an eternity. Consider the changing fortunes since the Football League's centenary year of four founder members, Bolton Wanderers and Everton, and especially those of Bolton's Jimmy Phillips.

In 1988, when Bolton went into the season's last day needing to win at Wrexham to claim the final automatic promotion place from the old Fourth Division, Phillips could only watch from a distance. A year earlier he had been sold to Rangers to finance a futile attempt to stay up.

That same May, Everton, still nominally the League champions, were looking wistfully towards the European Cup final between Benfica and PSV Eindhoven and wondering what might have been. Among the few Englishmen to beat the post-Heyes ban that season had been Phillips, who was in Rangers' rearguard when they

won in Kiev before a gathering of 100,000.

The narrowness of wins in Wales launched Bolton on the first step of what proved to be a rapid rise through the divisions. A similar success at Chelsea tomorrow would not only ensure their Premiership survival, but also negate any victory Everton might achieve at home to Coventry. One of the great "Super League" advocates would thus be relegated for the first time since Winston Churchill held the other premiership in 1951.

From Bolton's point of view, the drama is about more than a Lancashire town team striving to consolidate among the corporate elite and, indeed, sending one of their number down in the process.

Since they last tried to put down roots at the highest level, a one-season blunder in 1995-96, they have crossed the Rubicon (or rather the boundary with Horwich). After 102

Colin Todd's side take on Chelsea with their Premiership status at stake tomorrow. Phil Shaw on a recurring cycle of rise and fall

years at Burnden Park, a real state-of-the-art venue, they built the state-of-the-art Reebok Stadium.

Initially, the outcome of their struggle with Everton will be measured in human terms. Tears will flow and hearts grow heavy. But for Bolton, who spent £35m on constructing a futuristic home for the new millennium, the cost of failure would also be counted in concrete, steel and plastic.

If they were to slip into the Nationwide League again, it might be expected too much for Watford, Crewe or Port Vale to generate the same interest or revenue as Arsenal, Liverpool and Manchester United.

The current average gate, 24,500, is close to capacity. But for all the depth of feeling for

the club and their traditions, Bolton are not Sunderland. The gleaming white citadel just off the M61 could become a white elephant.

Not that Colin Todd and his team are thinking negatively. They have won four of the last eight matches and are scoring freely. What is more, the fixtures seem to be falling into place nicely. Having received Crystal Palace five days after they were officially doomed, and duly dispatched them 5-2, Bolton sat back and watched Everton being taken apart at Arsenal's championship party.

Arduous though a finale at fourth-placed Chelsea may appear, their destiny is now in their own hands. Moreover, the London club's recent performances have led to Howard Kendall, the

Everton manager, accusing them of playing "with their flip-flops on".

Kendall was no doubt trying to use a little psychology. Alex Ferguson-style. Nevertheless, his comments betray the not unreasonable fear that Chelsea will be soft-peddling to conserve their energies for the Cup-Winners' Cup final 72 hours later.

Bolton's scramble for safety has produced some unlikely heroes. The defender Neil Cox picked Aston Villa, his former club, as the scene for his first goal for the club. It set up a surprise win which revived hope after defeats by Derby and Leeds.

Then there is Bob Taylor, a striker deemed surplus to West Bromwich Albion's requirements a division lower. As costly recruits like the £3m Dean

Holdsworth have struggled to provide the requisite support for Nathan Blake, Taylor has contributed vital goals during two loan spells.

The player who has emerged as Bolton's most prized asset is the £5m-rated Alan Thompson, a Geordie midfielder with a lethal left foot. Yet there is no better symbol of the club's spirit and resilience than the one member of the squad actually born in the town, the same Jimmy Phillips.

The attacking left-back has seen it all since being taken on as an apprentice 15 years ago. When he made his full debut for the Wanderers, on the first day of 1984-85, only 4,400 were at Burnden to see it.

Three years later, as he settled into Ibrox as part of the Graeme Souness revolution, Bolton's free-fall led them to within one relegation of the Vauxhall Conference.

By the time he came home,

via Oxford and Middlesbrough, they were pushing for the Premiership under Bruce Rioch and Todd.

Last year, having been through two promotions and one demotion, he appeared to be on the way out when Todd bought first Robbie Elliott and then Mike Whitlow to play in his position. Phillips, 32, could have left but decided he would rather be involved peripherally at Bolton than regularly in the lower echelons.

Then both newcomers succumbed to long-term injuries, and he came back to share, nay star, in Bolton's spring revival. Such has been the panache with which he has played that the fans who were barracking him last autumn have dubbed him "Jiminho".

When Bolton were struggling at 2-2 against Palace, he chested down a pass, swivelled and scored with a textbook half-volley to ease the tension.



Phillips: Local boy who has finally become a local hero

It was, to coin a phrase, just like watching Brazil.

Phillips' first goal in four years was also a timely reminder to the management that his testimonial match, against Celtic, need not be his farewell.

Before he considers whether it is time to get on his bike, Bolton must stop the cycle of the euphoric rise followed by the instant fall. Make-or-break tomorrow beckons.

Dave Jones is proof you don't have to be a big name to get on



OLIVIA BLAIR
SINGS THE
PRAISES OF
SOME OF
FOOTBALL'S
UNSUNG
HEROES

SO after 272 days, 6,488 hours and more 90 minutes than most of us care to remember, it is almost all over bar the shouting (of which there will doubtless be a lot done during next week's Cup-Winners' Cup final, not to mention the play-offs). In truth, of course, this is the longest-ever football season, since there is hardly time to draw breath before the World Cup kicks off. But domestically, at least, the final whistle is nigh.

It has been business as usual this season. Bans and brawls, drink and drugs, friendships and not-so-friendships, injuries and comebacks, hirings and firings (42 managers got their marching orders) have all played their part. There have been highs and lows, successes and failures, winners and losers, heroes and villains.

And, of course, there have been unsung heroes.

It's a term normally applied, with all due respect, to football's unglamorous stars: the likes of Martin Keown, the Garys - Pullister and Mabbutt - and Carlton Palmer. But, in fact, football has more unsung heroes than most walks of life, and the following spring immediately to mind.

Never mind "Arsène Who?", it was "John Who?" when Gregory took over the Aston Villa reins from Brian Little, steering them quietly but quickly clear of the relegation danger. Down on the south coast, meanwhile, Southampton fans must be suffering from vertigo. More accustomed to peering down the relegation trap door, they've been craning their necks to-

wards Europe. Dave Jones won't be scared of the heights, having led Stockport to lofty perches last season but, like Gregory, he is proof that you don't have to be a big name to get on in this game.

Ditto Frank Sinclair who, despite his Jamaican connections, was the poor relation in Chelsea's jet-set squad. Yet his strike broke the deadlock in the Coca-Cola Cup final, just as his equaliser against Real Betis in the Cup Winners' Cup quarter-final sparked Chelsea's fightback. Sinclair was once the laughing stock of Stamford Bridge. Not so now.

Jason Lee knows all about being a laughing stock, but the man who once achieved unwanted notoriety for having a haircut the shape of a fruit that goes well with gammon had the last laugh this season;

it was his goal against Fulham that ultimately won Watford the Second Division championship.

Gary Jones' 28 goals have helped Notts County run away with the Third Division while goals from the veteran Steve Wood have been instrumental in ensuring Macleod's meteoric climb into the Second Division behind County.

It's been a forgettable season for Manchester City fans, but their loyalty has been as unforgettable as that of the Clydebank fans. The Bankies could win promotion from the Scottish Second Division today, but the fans have put long-term gain before short-term glory and stayed away in protest at the directors' handling of the club's affairs.

Bobbie has off too to Charlton, who have proved that small budget

doesn't always equal small ambition; to Stockport, Crewe and Bury, who have shown that what comes up does not always have to go down again; to Jim Jefferies and his Hearts side, who came close to breaking the Old Firm domination in Scotland; to the West Ham board, whose faith in Harry Redknapp is at last starting to pay dividends; to undefeated League of Wales champions, Barry Town; to Channel 5, who were bold enough to broadcast England's World Cup qualifier against Poland and Chelsea's European run (only for the BBC to poach the final); to Northern League side Truro Town, for reaching Wembley for the first time in their history (they play Tiverton Town in the FA Vase final today); to Everton's director of

youth coaching, Colin Harvey, for winning the FA Youth Cup (at least there's hope for Goodison's future); to Arsenal's Goodson of the Year, Steve Braddock, who won Highbury's first title of the season in April; and to Barnsley - down, but by never forgotten.

And with the World Cup in mind, we should perhaps applaud an unsung hero in the shape of the Italian striker, Christian Vieri, whose misplaced header in Rome ensured England's passage to France. And on a final note let's not forget the England World Cup song "On Top Of The World". Early signs are that it's unlikely to be afforded the heroic status of its predecessor, "Three Lions". In fact, it's more likely to remain - by the fans, at least - unsung.

Premiership team news

Aston Villa v Arsenal
Yorke 15
Leading scorer: Bergkamp 22
Last season: 2-2

The Aston Villa midfielder Ian Taylor will almost certainly miss tomorrow's game with a thigh problem. Lee Hendrie, also taken off against Wednesday with a calf strain, should be fit to return in the midfield against Arsène Wenger's title-winning side. Goalkeeper Mark Bosnich is hoping to reclaim his place from Michael Oakes after a bout of flu. Villa are definitely without defenders Steve Staunton and Riccardo Scimeca, who both have hamstring injuries. Simon Grayson may move forward from defence to replace Taylor. Arsenal will have almost a full-strength team after Emmanuel Petit and Dutch winger Marc Overmars both passed fitness tests. With the title already won, manager Arsène Wenger rested six key players in midweek while Petit was out with a shin injury and Overmars nursing a damaged ankle. Wenger recalls Tony Adams, David Seaman, Martin Keown, Patrick Vieira, Nigel Winterburn and Nicolas Anelka. Ian Wright is likely to lead the attack alongside Anelka, with Librarian Chris Weir on the substitutes' bench. The only significant omission will be the injured Dutchman, Dennis Bergkamp.

Barnsley v Manchester Utd
Redfern 14
Leading scorer: Cole 24
Last season: No fixture

Danny Wilson has a full Barnsley squad to choose from his team's last Premiership match before their return to the Nationwide League. With no injury worries, Wilson can call on the services of the Macedonian international striker Georgi Hristov and central defender Chris Morgan. Both players are available again after completing three and five-match bans respectively. Barnsley have conceded 80 Premiership goals this season, 33 of them at home. Despite a brief rally earlier in the year, they picked up only one point from the last 12. Manchester United manager Alex Ferguson will make several changes tomorrow to give games to some of his fringe players. Henning Berg, John Curtis, Michael Collins and Philip Mulvey are all likely to start. Rensford van der Grinten will continue in place of Peter Schmeichel, who is troubled with his hamstring injury. Ole Gunnar Solskjær is suspended and Ronny Johnsen is recovering from his cartilage operation. Brian McClair could make an emotional final League start for United after being told his Old Trafford days are over.

Blackburn v Newcastle
Gallagher 20
Leading scorer: Shearer, Barnes 7
Last season: 1-0

Billy McKinlay is available to help Blackburn attempt to secure their place in next season's Uefa Cup. The Scottish midfielder, who has been in doubt all week with an ankle injury, has been passed fit. Damien Duff will also be involved after coming through a check on an injured groin but captain Tim Sherwood has an ankle problem and will not play again this season. Manager Roy Hodgson must decide between goalkeepers John Folan, who has started the last three games, and fit-again Tim Flowers. Jeff Kenna played in an unfamiliar wing-back position last week but is likely to revert to full back at the expense of either Gary Croft or Patrick Valery. Kenny Dalgligh will put out his strongest Newcastle side for the final Premiership game of the season, rejecting any notions he may play a weakened side with the FA Cup final against Arsenal less than a week away. Captain Rob Lee and defender Steve Howey have both responded well to treatment on their respective foot and calf injuries and should both start. The only member of the squad unlikely to be available is Darren Peacock, who has a calf injury.

Chelsea v Bolton
Vail 18
Leading scorer: No fixture
Last season: No fixture

Frank Leboeuf has made an unexpected return from an ankle injury. He picked up the injury in last week's 3-1 defeat at Newcastle, but played 45 minutes in Kevin Hitchcock's testimonial against Nottingham Forest in midweek and is confident of being sent franco Zola continues to receive treatment in Italy on a long-term basis while Jamaican defender Frank Sinclair is also a big doubt with a knee problem. Captain Dennis Wise has a toe injury, Michael Duff is struggling to recover from an ankle problem, Graeme Le Saux has a calf strain and defender Andy Myers has a back problem. Bolton's player of the year, Andy Todd, could miss out on playing in tomorrow's relegation decider, because his father, manager Colin Todd, will not pick him. The defender is likely to be left on the bench. Todd Snr is expected to stick with Gerry Taggart - who came in when his son served a one-match ban - and kept his place as Bolton's last two games. Bolton face worries over strikers Dean Holdsworth and Bob Taylor, who both face fitness tests on hamstring injuries ahead of the biggest day of their season.

Crystal Palace v Sheff Wed
Dyer 8
Leading scorer: Di Canio 14
Last season: No fixture

Crystal Palace are likely to be without their French defender Valerien Ismael for their final Premiership game of the season (and of the near future). Ismael was injured in Tuesday's 3-3 draw with West Ham and that might mean ex-Volves defender Jamie Smith coming in as right wing-back and captain Marc Edworthy switching into the middle. The England Under-21 and B squad striker Matt Jansen, who has made such an impression since joining from Carlisle earlier this season, could return from injury. Palace have won two of their last five League games and drawn one. Sheffield Wednesday's Ron Atkinson, is likely to give his promising 19-year-old striker, Francesco Sannetti, his first start at Crystal Palace tomorrow. Sannetti made a stunning debut when coming on as a substitute in a 3-1 defeat at home to Aston Villa last weekend, scoring the Owls' consolation goal as well as hitting the woodwork. The Italian will play alongside compatriot Paolo Di Canio as Andy Booth is out through suspension following his dismissal against Everton two weeks ago. Wednesday have won one game in their last five.

...And statistics

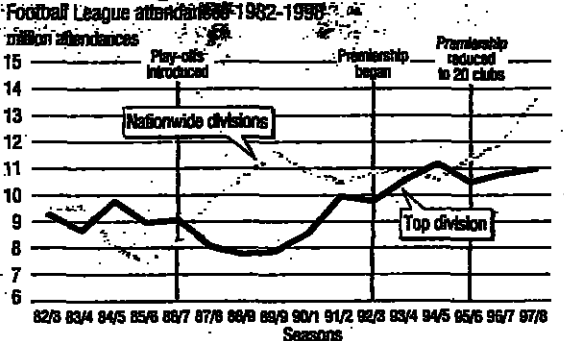
Sunderland lead the way as gates soar

Middlesbrough's Paul Merson (right) takes on Stockport's Martin McIntosh. Despite their relegation from the Premiership last year Middlesbrough have continued to fill the Riverside Stadium every week, while Stockport saw their gates rise this season by nearly 30 per cent

While football's resources have become increasingly concentrated on the Premiership in recent years, the game outside the top flight in England and Wales is also thriving. The three divisions beneath the Premiership enjoyed their best attendance this season for more than a quarter of a century. Crowds in the Nationwide League rose by 13.2 per cent on last season to reach a level not seen since the 1971-72 season. The biggest rise was in the First Division, where crowds rose by 20.1 per cent to an average of 15,079. Although the major boost was provided by the division's biggest clubs (Sunderland, in a season following relegation, saw an increase of 64 per cent after their move to a new stadium), there were also increases in some unexpected quarters. Even Reading, the bottom club, enjoyed an increase of more than five per cent.

The Second Division average was up by nearly nine per cent, though the Third Division showed a small drop.

The returning millions



Nationwide League attendances 1997-98

Division	Average gate 1997-98	Average gate 1996-97	Per cent change	League position
First Division	15,079	12,548	+20.1	1
Second Division	10,411	9,548	+9.0	2
Third Division	8,411	9,111	-7.7	3

Second Division

Club	Average gate 1997-98	Average gate 1996-97	Per cent change	League position
Reading	11,348	10,802	+5.0	1
Watford	11,333	10,894	+3.9	2
Sheff Wed	10,425	9,593	+8.6	3
Sheff Utd	9,493	8,411	+11.8	4
Fulham	8,493	7,644	+11.0	5
Millwall	7,023	7,743	-9.3	18
Sheff Albion	6,413	6,800	-5.8	19
Sheff B	6,413	6,800	-5.8	20
Sheff C	6,413	6,800	-5.8	21
Sheff D	6,413	6,800	-5.8	22
Sheff E	6,413	6,800	-5.8	23
Sheff F	6,413	6,800	-5.8	24
Sheff G	6,413	6,800	-5.8	25
Sheff H	6,413	6,800	-5.8	26
Sheff I	6,413	6,800	-5.8	27
Sheff J	6,413	6,800	-5.8	28
Sheff K	6,413	6,800	-5.8	29
Sheff L	6,413	6,800	-5.8	30

Third Division

Club	Average gate 1997-98	Average gate 1996-97	Per cent change	League position
Peterborough	6,114	5,945	+2.8	1
Notts County	5,725	5,238	+9.3	2
Walsley	5,592	5,191	+7.7	3
Leigh Rm	4,980	4,538	+9.7	4
Leeds Utd	4,012	3,183	+26.1	5
Exeter	3,990	3,014	+32.4	16
Sheff Albion	3,897	2,897	+34.5	17
Cardiff	3,574	3,594	-0.6	21
Sheff Albion	3,448	3,380	+2.0	22
Colchester	3,148	3,248	-3.1	4
Sheff Albion	3,038	2,897	+4.9	8
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	18
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	19
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	20
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	21
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	22
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	23
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	24
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	25
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	26
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	27
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	28
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	29
Sheff Albion	2,905	1,407	+106.5	30

FA CARLING PREMIERSHIP: HOW THEY STAND

		Home					Away					Form (past result in bold)	Remaining matches			
		P	Pts	GD	W	D	L	F	A	W	D			L	F	A
1	Arsenal (A)	37	74	+26	12	4	2	42	9	9	4	5	29	17	WDDWW	Tomorrow Barnsley (A).
2	Man Utd	37	74	+45	8	4	2	42	9	9	4	5	29	17	WDDWW	Tomorrow Barnsley (A).
3	Sheff Albion	37	60	+17	12	2	4	35	14	7	1	11	34	29	WDDWW	Tomorrow Bolton (H).
4	Chelsea	37	60	+26	12	2	4	35	14	7	1	11	34	29	LWWLL	Tomorrow Bolton (H).
5	Leeds	37	55	+11	10	4	4	39	26	5	6	8	17	26	WDDWW	Tomorrow Bolton (H).
6	Blackburn	37	55	+4	10	4	4	39	26	5	6	8	17	26	WLDWL	Tomorrow Newcastle (H).
7	Sheff Wed	37	53	+11	6	10	3	21	15	7	4	7	27	22	WDDWW	Tomorrow West Ham (A).
8	Leicester	37	53	+11	6	10	3	21	15	7	4	7	27	22	DDWDW	Tomorrow West Ham (A).
9	West Ham	37	53	+4	11	3	4	32	18	4	4	11	19	3	DWLLD	Tomorrow Liverpool (H).
10	Derby	37	52	+2	11	3	4	32	18	4	4	11	19	3	LLLLW	Tomorrow Liverpool (H).
11	Coventry	37	47	-5	10	1	8	28	23	4	4	10	21	3	DDDDW	Tomorrow Tottenham (A).
12	Southampton	37	47	-5	10	1	8	28	23	4	4	10	21	3	LDLWL	Tomorrow Tottenham (A).
13	Newcastle	37	44	-8	9	5	5	30	26	3	3	9	13	25	WLLLD	Tomorrow Barnsley (A).
14	Sheff Wed	37	44	-4	9	5	5	30	26	3	3	9	22	40	LDLWL	Tomorrow C Palace (A).
15	Wolves	37	44	-21	6	6	6	25	25	7	6	6	5	20	DDLLD	Tomorrow Barnsley (A).
16	Tottenham	37	43	-12	7	7	4	22	21	4	3	9	21	34	LDDWW	Tomorrow Southampton (H).
17	Bolton	37	43	-21	6	7	4	22	21	4	3	9	16	37	DDLLD	Tomorrow Coventry (H).
18	Everton	37	39	-15	7	4	7	24	26	2	8	9	16	29	WDDLL	Tomorrow Coventry (H).
19	Barnsley (H)	37	35	0	7	1	7	25	25	1	5	10	17	47	WLLLD	Tomorrow Newcastle (H).
20	C Palace (H)	37	30	-35	1	5	12	14	39	6	4	9	22	32	WWLLD	Tomorrow Sheff Wed (H).

Derby v Liverpool
Winchop 16
Leading scorer: Owen 23
Last season: 0-1

Derbys are without several top players for tomorrow's final game of the first season at Pride Park. Injuries and suspensions have affected Jim Smith's plans since the season started and the story is a familiar one as he prepares for the visit of Liverpool. Italian wing-back Stefano Eranio is out with a groin injury while midfielder Darryl Powell and striker Deon Burton are on international duty with Jamaica. Striker Francesco Baiano is fit again after a knee injury and captain Igor Stimac could also be back after missing three games with a chest infection. Jason McAteer is definitely out of the Liverpool side with a leg injury. Captain Paul Ince is very doubtful with an ankle problem. Robbie Fowler, Rob Jones and Dominic Matteo are all out, while Patrik Berger and Bjorne Kvarme have flu. Jamie Redknapp, struggling with knee ligament trouble, has a remote chance of being fit. It could mean that Michael Thomas could play and youngsters Gareth Roberts and Haukur Ingi Gudnason are likely to be in the squad. Darryl Murphy and David Thompson could also come into contention.

Everton v Coventry
Ferguson 11
Leading scorer: Dublin 22
Last season: 1-1

New signing John Spencer is Everton's only injury doubt as they prepare for tomorrow. He has a groin problem and has only just started light training. Howard Kendall is likely to restore French striker Michael Madar to the starting line-up after leaving him on the substitutes' bench for the 4-0 defeat at Arsenal last weekend. Tomorrow's game is already a 40,000-plus sell-out and will relive memories of the last-day encounter with Wimbledon four seasons ago that Everton won to avoid the drop. England B striker Darren Huckerby is doubtful for Coventry. The 22-year-old, who has scored 15 times this season, damaged an ankle in training. Third-choice goalkeeper Tyan Scope fell on the striker's leg during a practice session on Monday and Huckerby has been unable to train since. The obvious replacement if Huckerby cannot play would have been Viorel Moldovan, but he is with the Romanian World Cup squad and will not join Coventry until pre-season training. City's manager, Gordon Strachan, said that he would like Huckerby to play, but if he is unfit, Simon Haworth will be deputy.

Leeds Utd v Wimbledon
Heseltine 22
Leading scorer: Leeson, Bull 8
Last season: 1-0

Leeds' defender Martin Hiden is manager George Graham's only doubt for tomorrow's final Eland Road match of the season. The £1.5m centre-half damaged a hamstring in training and will undergo a late fitness check. If he is not deemed fit enough to play he will be replaced by either Lucas Radebe or Gary Kelly at the heart of the defence. Graham's other casualties are the Portuguese midfielder Bruno Ribeiro, who recently underwent surgery on a groin injury, and Dutch defender Robert Molenaar, who is missing with a knee problem. Leeds' Uefa Cup place is already assured. The Wimbledon midfielder and captain Robbie Earle is fit after three weeks out with a broken toe, and as well as being included in the squad for tomorrow's game, has been given the all-clear to play for Jamaica in the World Cup Finals in France this summer. "The specialist told me the fracture is healing as expected and that I would do no further damage to it by playing," Earle said. "There is bound to be some discomfort but the important thing is that I will be able to play." The Dons are likely to have an otherwise unchanged team.

Tottenham v Southampton
Giro 9
Leading scorer: Le Tissier 13
Last season: 3-1

Jürgen Klinsmann will make his last-ever appearance for Tottenham at White Hart Lane against Southampton tomorrow in a game which also marks the end of Gary Mabbutt's 16 years' service at the club. But while Klinsmann will start the game, club captain Mabbutt - whose contract is not being renewed - is only likely to be on the bench and hoping for a late appearance as substitute. Defender Ramon Vega is available again after suspension but faces a late fitness test on a broken nose, while David Howells, Clive Wilson and Steffen Iversen are all definitely out. John Beresford hopes to be fit for Southampton's final game of the season. Beresford, a £1.5m signing from Newcastle in February, has been forced to miss the last two games with an ankle injury but returned to training this week. Defender Richard Dryden is expected to recover from a virus which kept him out of last weekend's defeat against Derby. England Under-21 striker Kevin Davies is still unavailable with the knee injury that has kept him out of contention for the last four games.

West Ham v Leicester
Harrison 24
Leading scorer: Marshall 10
Last season: 1-0

West Ham's Rio Ferdinand will have a late fitness check on a neck injury to see if he can play for the Hammers tomorrow. The England defender missed the 3-3 midweek draw at Crystal Palace, but is hoping to be fit for a match that Harry Redknapp's side must win if they are to have a chance of qualifying for European football next season. If Ferdinand fails to make it, captain Steve Lomas will move from defence back into midfield. Trevor Sinclair will rejoin Paul Kitson up front, and Samassi Abou will drop to the bench. West Ham have drawn two, lost two and won one of their last five games. Leicester City manager Martin O'Neill should have two key players back for their final game of the season. Garry Parker has recovered from a groin strain, while Swedish defender Pontus Kaarmark is making good progress after suffering a back injury. Ian Marshall will play in attack or defence depending on whether Kaarmark is passed fit. Leicester have won two and drawn three of their last five Premiership games and could still mathematically qualify for a Uefa Cup place if they won and other results go their way.



YOUR MONEY

Personal finance, motoring and property

Saturday 9 May 1998

Hitting the tourist trail

Travellers heading off the beaten track this summer face a fourfold rise in travel insurance. Paul Slade reports on a little noticed tax hike

A holiday off the beaten track is a dream for millions of travellers who don't wish to undergo the regimented experience of package trips abroad.

Increasing numbers of holidaymakers achieve that dream. Yet, thanks to a little-noticed measure announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, in his last Budget, those of us who avoid package tours will face a fourfold rise in tax on our travel insurance this summer. One in five travellers will be hit.

The tax hike on travel insurance hits cover bought from brokers or banks. The tax added to your premiums when you buy from these outlets rises from 4 per cent to 17.5 per cent on 1 August.

The change will bring the Treasury extra tax of just £15m in a full year. But experts warn that, for the most part, it is holidaymakers who must pay the price. Robert Smith of Douglas Cox Tyrie (DCT), a firm of brokers, says: "Certainly, our insurers are not going to be able to carry it. And, with such a big difference from 4 per cent to 17.5 per cent, there's no way we can absorb it either."

On DCT's estimates, the rise means a family of two adults and three children planning a 17-day trip outside Europe will pay £115.55 instead of the current £102.25 for their cover. Travel insurance will pay out if you lose your belongings while on holiday, have your holiday delayed, or have to cancel for reasons beyond your own control. But by far the most important element is that it will pay your medical bills if you fall sick or have an accident while abroad. This is particularly valuable outside the European Union, where you will not be able to rely on reciprocal

The cost of travel insurance

Single Trip cover (17 days)	Europe	Worldwide
Two adults:	£79.90	£129.90
Two adults and three children:	£189.79	£278.04
Two adults, one over 65:	£79.90*	£154.44

Going Places premium rates, showing current travel agents' tax rate of 17.5 per cent. Excludes ski cover. Assumes children are aged 12 or younger.

* Premium may be higher for those over 70. Source: Going Places.

arrangements between you and the host country and the NHS.

Paul Sparks, of TSB General, the general insurance arm that is part of Lloyds Bank/TSB Group, says: "If you're abroad and you become sick or injured, without travel insurance, you can be financially ruined. I think it's something most people will still feel they have to have, but they will not be happy they've got to pay this extra tax."

If you are a frequent traveller, and buy insurance cover for a whole year at a time, it may make sense to buy your next policy before 1 August to lock in your cover at the lower rate for the next 12 months.

Smith says up to 20 per cent of travellers buy their insurance from banks or brokers, and that these buyers tend to be independent-minded. "Perhaps they're bored with the average package holiday, and looking for something a little bit different," he says. "They're fairly streetwise, and used to shopping around."

The increase in tax puts these travellers on the same footing as people buying from travel agents and tour operators, where premiums have been taxed at 17.5 per cent since 1 April, 1997. Their rate of tax was increased to combat what Customs & Excise saw as creative accounting.

Travel agents often sell a holiday and the associated insurance as a single package. The tax rate payable on travel insurance premiums in 1996 was just 2.5 per cent, as against the 17.5 per cent VAT charged on the holiday element of the package. Customs believed tour operators were loading much of the total transaction on to the insurance side of the books in order to save tax.

The 1996 Conservative Budget therefore increased the insurance premium tax rate to 17.5 per cent for these outlets, bringing it into line with VAT. The standard rate of tax on insurance premiums rose from 2.5 per cent to 4 per cent.

Mike Beaumont of Thomas Cook says: "The Customs & Excise argument was that we were value-shifting as an industry. We never felt that was the case, so we are very pleased it has been equalised now." But the end result has been to give Mr Brown a perfect excuse to raise the rate of travel insurance tax payable to 17.5 per cent for everyone.

Mr Smith believes that brokers and banks will continue to offer better deals. He says: "Products bought direct are still likely to be cheaper, because the travel agent is putting a fairly hefty mark-up on it. Buying direct will still be a better deal for the customer."



Fishing for revenue: From 1 August, travel insurance will be taxed at 17.5 per cent rather than 4 per cent. Photograph: Frank Orel/Tony Stone Images

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Closed banks

The Government this week launched an investigation into high street banks and threatened to toughen the existing Banking Code of Practice after complaints that some institutions are failing to deal openly with their customers.

Helen Liddell, Economic Secretary to the Treasury, said she was "extremely concerned" about claims that some banks are not telling their customers about different accounts.

The probe also follows angry protests from clients of Northern Rock, the former building society, who claim they have been switched between accounts without their consent.

Eager savers

Research by Alliance & Leicester has managed to find a strong "will to save" among 18 to 25-year-olds. People in their late 20s and 30s also said they wanted to save more. To cater for this hitherto invisible band of young savers, Alliance & Leicester is launching a new account with the option of saving by monthly standing order over one, two or three years.

Finer China

Which is worth more: a transfer-printed copy of a Chinese blue and white tea bowl, made in Staffordshire in about 1815, or an original one made in China in the mid-18th century with the design painted by hand? As John Windsor explains on page 3, they are worth about the same. And both are eminently collectable.

Well endowed?

Will your endowment policy be worth enough to pay off your mortgage when it matures? These and a range of other questions about with-profits policies are analysed in a special feature by Nic Cicutti on pages 6 and 7.

Awash in a sea of Rolexes and camcorders

Travel insurance is there to protect people in the event of unforeseen accidents and minor tragedies that can befall anyone holidaying abroad. Most of us will never need to make a claim on our cover. But a minority will have cause to.

And, as far as an even smaller minority is concerned, if all the claims for lost property were to be believed, Florida would be knee-deep in video cameras and the beaches of the Cote d'Azur awash in Rolex watches.

The medical cover also attracts its share of fraudsters. Here are just two examples of criminal claims, taken from the files of insurer Home & Overseas:

■ A Glasgow man submitted more than 10

claims for £2,500 tailor-made suits which he claimed had been lost in transit by various airlines. He used a pad of receipts he had acquired from a real tailor. He was caught after the police raided his home and discovered a cabinet full of claim forms and a leaflet entitled *How to make £2,000 on your holiday*.

■ A London woman claimed for loss of sight in her left eye five times over a period of 18 months. The accidents she reported included a street attack in Tehran, falling off a chair while trying to get her suitcase out of the loft and having someone fall on her in a swimming pool. She pocketed more than £100,000 from insurers before being caught and sentenced to 18 months in prison.

The Chancellor's travel sting

Single Trip Cover (17 days)	Europe	Worldwide
	Current premium	New premium
Two adults:	£38.66	£44.76
Two adults and three children:	£49.50	£55.95
Two adults, one over 65:	£38.66	£44.76

Travel premium changes showing August 1, 1998, increase in insurance premium tax to 17.5 per cent on policies bought from banks or brokers. Excludes ski cover. Assumes that adults are under 65 unless otherwise stated and that children are aged between 2 and 17. Source: Douglas Cox Tyrie

How not 2 b a smart investor

Nic Cicutti finds that Barclays' new baby, b², offers its customers more style than substance

Millions of risk-averse bank and building society customers are to be targeted by a new, "hip" subsidiary of Barclays Bank, offering equity-linked products that guarantee money back should stock markets fall.

Barclays has set up b², a telephone-based operation which aims to wean savers away from an ingrained tendency to stash their cash in deposit accounts.

According to b², 4 million Britons "lost" an average £2,700 each by not investing in the stock market. Although they made £246 in interest pay-

ments from their accounts, had they placed their money in shares they would have gained 10 times that much.

To win them over, b² will offer an advanced savings account (ASA), a fund that can be placed in a tax-free PEP or new Individual Savings Account from April 1999. Unlike typical savings accounts, this one gives investors limited exposure to the stock market through its Stock Market Growth Fund, which aims to outperform the FTSE 100 share index.

But, unlike most equity funds, the ASA guarantees that should the market fall during one of three investment periods—three, five or seven years—savers' money will be returned in full.

Mark Bogard, managing director of b², says: "Many people feel that they could make more of their money than in the building society. They simply don't feel confident or com-

fortable to do anything about it.... We have spoken to thousands of savers and found they wanted that gap bridged by a company with the know-how, security and stability of a blue-chip financial provider. Savers want something safe but exciting. b²



will deliver that. It's a small name that stands for a big idea."

In truth, the big idea, which took Barclays 18 months to refine, is also an old idea. It involves offering a so-called "guaranteed product", where a slice of a person's investment

buys a derivative product which is used to meet the guarantee of a return of funds if stock markets should fall.

Whereas other guaranteed funds set a 5 per cent cap on potential losses each quarter, the ASA returns funds in full—but only as long as the money is left invested over the pre-agreed period referred to earlier. Otherwise, the guarantee will only cover 85 per cent of a fund's value: if stock markets fall by more than that—tough.

The cost of this guarantee is extremely high. Typically, between 5 and 8 per cent of the sum invested is used to buy the derivatives to protect the capital. In the case of b², it is between 13.7 and 13.9 per cent.

The effect of this is simple: if the Stock Market Growth Fund were to rise by 45 per cent over three years, a reasonable bull run, the value of a £100 investment would be £124.84,

equivalent to about 8.2 per cent a year. Hardly that exciting. Of course, this doesn't include dividends, which might add 2 per cent or more annually. But then, the company's 1.5 per cent annual management fee plus 0.9 per cent bid-offer spread would dent those.

The essence of the new b² account, however, is the premise that today's investors want a combination of things. One of them is accessibility. b² aims to provide it with instant access, total flexibility as to payments, telephone access seven days a week and no penalties for withdrawals.

The company calculates that its trendy image will help it break into the market for building society accounts. Whether it succeeds depends on the level of excitement prospective clients are seeking. Judging by the product they are being tempted with—not much.

Thought for the day

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Barclays' new deal fails to square up

NIC CICUTTI

Every now and then, someone comes along with a new idea that changes the way we perceive the world of personal finance.

More than a decade ago, Direct Line did it with car and home insurance, which it decided to sell over the telephone. First Direct, a subsidiary of Midland Bank, has taken since 1989 to achieve the same with telephone banking but appears to have succeeded at last.

Virgin did it a few years ago, when it launched its low-cost tracker PEP, also available over the phone. The company's product has now been superseded by better ones, but its initiative forced others to follow suit. The slew of supermarket banks—Tesco, Sainsbury's, Safeway—in the past 24 months is another marketing idea which combines simplicity with a good deal for savers.

Will we see b's, the new subsidiary of Barclays Bank, in a similar way in a few years' time? Anything is possible, of course, but I doubt it. Perhaps I should clarify my view: I hope not, for were it to happen it would be a sign that the British investing public has opted for a mediocre deal wrapped up in supposedly "cool" typography and design.

Details of the b's product are reported on our front page. Essentially, what the company says it is offering is a hybrid product, with the potential of better returns than a building society account, similar risks and the same ease of access.

But the reality is that almost anyone considering an investment into this sort of fund is unlikely to want to use it as some sort of instant access account. They will

want to commit their money for the longer term and, mostly, be prepared to leave it untouched for several years in the ASA. If so, despite the much-vaunted accessibility of the b's account—7am to 10pm, seven days a week—most people other than a few loonies and show-offs will tend to stick with more regular calling times. Yet they will still pay for a "service" they never use.

Moreover, the b's offering is worse, in terms of its exposure to any potential stock market gains, than many of its rival products. Unless the present bull market continues for the next seven years, potential returns are unlikely to be that exciting.

Over shorter periods of time, it is worth remembering another company which sold a three-year guaranteed fund in the early 1990s. Scottish Provident vacuumed up hundreds of millions of pounds from savers who subscribed to several tranches of its Capital Guarantee Bonds. Yet when the bonds matured, in most cases the money would have done better had it been left in a building society. Some deal.

There is also something slightly sad about Barclays owning up to the fact it can't attract punters under under its own steam and has to come up with another name and trendy imagery to do so.

If so, I'm not convinced this is a winner. It smacks too much of corporate fortysomethings devising a strategy to target a market of fiftysomethings who want to be thirtysomethings. Mark Bogard, managing director at b's, calls it "safe but exciting". I call it William Hague with a baseball cap.

MONEY MAKEOVER

Plans to maximise lump-sum savings

THE MAKEOVER

Name: Patricia Willmot
Age: 57
Occupation: Call co-ordinator for a large company

The problem: Pat recently inherited about £30,000, which she has placed mostly in bank or building society accounts. She also has shares from Halifax and share options from her work worth £20,000. After planning for potential emergencies she wants to invest her surplus funds, which include bank and building society deposit accounts, in the most useful way possible.

The solution: A reserve fund needs to be set aside. Thereafter, it makes sense to sell the shares and use this money, plus whatever is left from the inheritance, to diversify into other collective investments and spread her risk.

Patricia Willmot is divorced with two grown-up daughters. She has worked for her employer for 19 years and currently earns £34,700 a year in a senior administrative role which provides her with private healthcare, a share option scheme and a final-salary pension scheme with a retirement age of 65. Pat would like to work until 65, but is worried a merger of her company lead to her being made redundant.

In addition to her Halifax shares and share options, plus her deposit accounts and £3,000 in a Tessa, Pat is paying £178 a month into a Halifax personal equity plan (PEP), and two with-profit endowments with Standard Life, set to mature in 2002 and 2007. Her home is valued at £100,000, on which she has a mortgage of £66,000 on a three-year discount which she is part-way through. She is fairly risk-averse.

To protect herself (and the mortgage) against the threat of illness, Pat pays £188 a month for a critical illness policy which would pay out £66,000 in the event of her suffering one of a range of serious illnesses.

The adviser: James Bruce, an independent financial adviser who is a member of the Institute of Financial Planning and the Society of Financial Ad-



Patricia Willmot could save over £100 a month by rethinking her critical illness insurance

Photograph: Keith Dobney

visers. His company, Corporate and Personal Planning, is based at Highwoods Square, Highwoods, Colchester, Essex (01206 841176).

The advice: Pat has several objectives. She wants to establish an emergency fund and would like a new kitchen in her home, which might cost up to £10,000. She also wants to review her existing investments and invest any other surplus as appropriate. A review of her expenditure shows she might have £100 or so available for regular investment each month.

Generally, the size of emergency funds one has is up to the individual, although I regard three months' expenditure as a suitable guideline. In this instance, I would suggest £5,000 and would recommend this money is placed in a C&G postal account, which offers a competitive rate of interest.

As for the kitchen, as Pat can plan ahead she can afford to tie

up the funds in a notice account, which should give her a higher rate of interest. On balances of £10,000, Halifax pays a gross rate of interest of 7.3 per cent (Source: Money Facts, April 1998). A marginally higher rate of interest, cur-

Therefore, it makes sense to think in terms of investments. Her shares have been acquired by chance and do not really offer a reasonably diversified, actively managed portfolio. We typically recommend people achieve these two aims through

This leaves a balance of about £26,000. My advice would be to look at fixed-interest funds for about £12,000 of this money. A good fund for this would be Exeter's Zero Preference unit trust, which aims to produce steady capital growth with minimal risk. In the past five years it has achieved returns of 9.1 per cent.

I would then recommend that about £8,000 be placed in managed funds, which will provide a balance of fixed interest and equity-based exposure. The Framlington Managed Distribution unit trust aims to combine an above-average level of income with long-term capital growth.

The current split of the fund means a majority is invested in UK equities, with the balance in fixed-interest securities and cash. Over the past three years it has achieved annualised growth rates of about 13.4 per cent, with income of about 4.2 per cent a year. However, this

money can be reinvested until an income option becomes necessary later on.

Finally, I would go for a direct equity fund. Gairmore's British Growth unit trust focuses on top-notch UK equities. Typically, blue chip stocks make up about 70 per cent of Gairmore's portfolio. Again, the performance of this fund has been above-average in its sector for several years. My advice is that £6,000 be placed in this fund.

My recommendation is that the last two investments be placed within a Skandia Mini-FUND wrapper. Skandia is an insurance company which offers a choice of about 100 funds from 11 large companies. It also offers six-monthly valuations, annual income reporting, a freephone desk and helpline.

There are extra charges levied by Skandia for this service, on top of the annual fund management fee. But for someone who might be seeking regular reviews and active management—that is, the option of switching from one fund to another to maximise out-performance and minimise poor returns, Skandia's option involves no charge for switching, save any bid-offer spread, on which a discount has usually been negotiated.

Pat says she can save £100 a month. My suggestion is that the money be divided equally between Newton Fund Managers Income and Jupiter Fund Managers' European unit trusts, to achieve even greater fund diversity. Again, these funds have delivered consistent above-average performance. Here, too, I would advise the investment take place under the Skandia wrapper.

Lastly, Pat indicated that she pays £188 a month for her critical illness policy with Halifax. I would suggest that a term-based policy, linked to the number of years she has left on her mortgage, would be much cheaper. A similar critical illness policy with another provider for nine years, when her endowments mature, could cost as little as £66 a month, a considerable cost saving.

'Three months' expenditure is a suitable guideline for the amount of emergency funds to put aside'

rently 7.9 per cent gross, is available from Northern Rock's Select 90 account.

Providing for the emergency fund and the planned expenditure has taken £15,000 of the £26,850 on deposit. This leaves £11,850, plus a further £19,842, the value of Pat's direct equity holdings. She could use part or all of this to pay off some of her mortgage. But this could incur heavy redemption penalties.

collective investments such as investment trusts.

Therefore, my advice to Pat would be to dispose of her existing Halifax and company shares. She should then top up her contributions into her Halifax PEP, with a payment of £3,864, to maximise her current year's allowance of £6,000. Then, I would suggest placing £1,900 into Pat's Tessa, to maximise her Tessa allowance.

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BRIAN TORA

Fear is driving the bulls

Taking a break from the bustle of markets should provide the chance to distance yourself from events and gain a little perspective on business affairs. In practice, any perspective is usually eroded by the acres of required reading as you endeavour to catch up with a fortnight's worth of financial news.

This year's saunter around a number of islands certainly gave me cause to reflect. In Madeira I learned interest-rate worries had coaxed the bears back on to the street. By Gorsemy it seemed the bulls were back in the ascendancy. Strolling the streets of St Helier, full of festive French making the most of May Day, I was inclined to the view that it was fear not greed that was keeping the market high.

Sellers were not much in evidence when shares took a tumble on the back of speculation over a rate rise from the Fed. We may have lost 100 points-plus here in London, but the real business came when bargain hunters emerged to pick among the debris of a drab day's dealing.

The fear is evident from the way in which professional managers are clearly worried about being out of the market. Two years and 40 per cent ago, some leading managers were pointing to an alarming rise in valuation levels. A number felt a correction was due and raised cash in anticipation of a setback that never happened. The underperformance of these leading managers is now a matter of record. Being left behind again is not an option.

It helps perpetuate a rather unhealthy scenario. Since 1963, Paine Webber, in the US, has published a graph of professional investors' sentiment. Known as the Bulls and Bears Sentiment, it classifies the opinions expressed in more than 140 market

newsletters, produced by independent non-broking organisations, as bullish, bearish and correction. Correction consists of those investors who maybe nervous in the short term, but remain optimistic in the long run.

Their methodology is simple. By dividing the number of bulls by the sum of the total bulls and bears, they reach a percentage figure which gives a contrarian indicator for the market. A high percentage bull rate is an indication that a market top is about to be reached. Low, and you could be seeing a bottom.

One of my colleagues has used this system to great effect in keeping us all committed to the US despite widespread concern over the pace of the rise. The Index is now encouraging him to change his view. Suddenly, the bulls are all in the ascendancy – and it all coincides with continuing strength in the market. He now believes (as indeed the indicator suggests) the next move in prices has to be down.

If my colleague is right then it is no good trying to be clever about UK shares. We have seen how much the US and UK have been able to withstand the bearish sentiment that has arisen in the Far East. Whether we could hold out against bearish sentiment in the US is another matter entirely. US shares are worth more than three-times the value of all the Far Eastern stock markets put together.

So a correction looks to be on the cards. It all depends on the extent of any setback, but the nice warm relaxed feeling that remains with me from my holiday is not to be translated into buying frenzy, at least for the time being.

Brian Tora is chairman of the Greig Middleton investment strategy committee.

BEST BORROWING RATES

Telephone	% Rate and period	Max. rate %	Fee	Locality
MORTGAGES				
FIXED RATES				
Scotcharange BS	0800 133140	5.95% for 1 year	95%	FreeARP for rate up to 8.75%
FirstMortgage	0800 080086	5.40% to 30.0.01	75%	£295
Northern Rock	0845 005 0500	6.15% to 1.0.03	95%	£295 No ARP for rate up to 8.75%
VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Scotcharange BS	0800 133140	1.50% for 1 year	80%	£250 £250 rebate
FirstMortgage	0800 080086	4.44% to 30.0.01	75%	£295
Northern Rock	0845 005 0500	5.65% to 1.0.03	95%	£295
FIRST TIME BUYERS FIXED RATES				
Northern Rock	0845 005 0500	3.80% to 1.0.03	95%	£295 No ARP for rate up to 8.75%
Hallifax	0800 101110	5.75% to 31.0.01	90%	£195 No high landing fee (ARP)
Northern Rock	0845 005 0500	6.15% for 5 years	90%	£295 No high landing fee
FIRST TIME BUYERS VARIABLE DISCOUNTED RATES				
Scotcharange BS	01802 877485	5.25% to 1.7.98	80%	£20 3% of advance released
FirstMortgage	0800 080086	5.50% to 30.0.01	90%	£295
Northern Rock	0800 302010	6.05% for 5 years	95%	£295
UNSECURED PERSONAL LOANS				
Telephone	APR %	Fixed monthly payments on £5K over 3 yrs	With insurance	Without insurance
UNSECURED				
Northern Rock	0845 421421	9.9% H	£188.13	£188.13
Yorkshire Bank	0800 202122	12.5%	£190.33	£190.33
Direct Line	0181 680 9966	12.9% A	£188.75	£188.75
SECURED LOANS (SECOND CHARGE)				
Telephone	APR %	Min. LTV Advance	Term	
Clydesdale Bank	0800 240024	6.7%	£2K to £10K	5 years to 25 years
Royal Bank of Scotland	0800 121121	10.7%	£2.5K to £100K	3 years to 25 years
First Direct	0345 100103	11.2%	£5K to £50K	Up to 40 years
OVERDRAFTS				
Telephone	Account	% p.a.	APR %	% p.a.
Alfred & Leicester	0500 955585	10.9%	12.0%	23.0%
Bank of Scotland Direct	0800 804804	10.7%	11.0%	25.0%
Northern Rock	0800 302010	10.7%	12.2%	23.0%
CREDIT CARDS				
Telephone	Card Type	Rate % p.a.	APR %	Annual fee, first time fee
Capital One Bank	0800 690000	Visa	0.565% 6.50% H	Nil 54 days
RBS Advance	0800 377770	Visa	0.64% 7.50% H	56 days
Co-operative Bank	0800 109000	Advantage Visa	0.59% 6.50% H	0 days
GOLD CARDS				
Capital One Bank	0800 690000	Visa	0.565% 6.50% H	54 days £20K
Co-operative Bank	0345 212121	Bank Rate Visa	0.60% 11.50% H	45 days £20K
RBS Advance	0800 377770	Visa	0.64% 7.50% H	56 days £20K
STORE CARDS				
Telephone	Payment by direct debit	Payment by other methods	% p.a.	APR %
John Lewis	Visa store	1.30%	18.0%	1.30%
John Lewis	Visa store	1.50%	20.0%	1.50%
John Lewis	Visa store	1.90%	25.0%	1.90%

BEST SAVINGS RATES

Telephone number	Account	Interest rate	Deposit	Term	Notes
INSTANT ACCESS					
Clydesdale Bank	0800 445225	Savings	Instant	£1	6.75% Day
Yorkshire Bank	0800 222230	Card Saver	Instant	£20	6.50% Day
Standard & Securities BS	0345 413555	Branch Instant	Instant	£100	6.00% Day
Leeds & Hallam BS	0500 222777	Branch Instant	Instant	£100	7.00% Day
INSTANT ACCESS POSTAL ACCOUNTS					
Standard Life Bank	0345 905667	Direct Access	Instant (7)	£1	6.00% Year
Scottish Widows Bank	0845 845 8029	Instant Access	Instant (8)	£100	7.00% Year
Savemy Bank	0800 505555	Direct Savings	Instant (9)	£1,000	7.50% Year
Northern Rock	0845 000 8707	Save Direct Instant	Instant (9)	£5,000	7.00% Year
NOTICE ACCOUNTS & BONDS					
Scotcharange BS	01723 950616	Scotcharange 30	30 Day	£1,000	7.00% Year
Legal & General Bank	0200 111200	50 Direct	60 Day (8)	£10,000	6.00% Year
Edinburgh & West	0200 222121	Postal 30	30 Day (7)	£10,000	7.00% Year
Investment Bank (UK)	0171 285 1550	Base Plan	1 Year	£2,001	8.00% Year
CHEQUE ACCOUNTS					
Investment Bank (UK)	0171 285 1550	NDA 5000	Instant	£5,000	6.00% Month
Hallifax	0113 235 6220	Asset Reserve	Instant	£10,000	5.00% Day
Cheltenham BS	0800 429429	Classic Postal	Instant	£10,000	5.00% Year
Lloyds Bank	01253 385385	Instant Access	Instant	£10,000	6.75% Year
FIXED RATE BONDS					
Norwich & Peterborough	01733 372222	Fixed Rate Bond	5 Month	£5,000	7.50% F
Shropshire BS	01549 822000	Fixed Rate Bond	10.3.99	£10,000	7.00% F
Portsmouth BS	01302 802800	Search Fixed Rate Bond	1 Year	£500	7.50% F
First Direct	0800 371011	Fixed Rate	5 Year	£2,500	7.00% F
FIRST TESSAS					
Norwich & Peterborough	01733 372222	First Tessa	5 Year	£100	8.00% Year
Standard & Securities BS	0800 505555	First Tessa	5 Year	£500	8.00% Year
Darlington BS	01253 385385	First Tessa	5 Year	£500	8.00% Year
Sun Building Corp	01436 744505	First Tessa	5 Year	£1,000	8.00% Year
FOLLOW-ON TESSAS					
Standard & Securities BS	0800 505555	Follow-on Tessa	5 Year	£3,001	8.00% Year
Sun Building Corp	01436 744505	Follow-on Tessa	5 Year	£3,001	8.00% Year
Norwich & Peterborough	01733 372222	Follow-on Tessa	5 Year	£100	8.00% Year
Edinburgh & West	0800 132304	Follow-on Tessa	5 Year	£3,001	8.00% Year
GUARANTEED INCOME BONDS (net)					
Prudential Insurance	0181 287 9007	Guaranteed Income Bond	1 Year	£5,000	8.25% F
ITL London & Edinburgh	01903 820820	Guaranteed Income Bond	2 Year	£5,000	8.00% F
Norwich & Peterborough	0800 505555	Guaranteed Income Bond	3 Year	£5,000	8.00% F
ITL London & Edinburgh	01903 820820	Guaranteed Income Bond	4 Year	£5,000	8.00% F
ITL London & Edinburgh	01903 820820	Guaranteed Income Bond	5 Year	£5,000	8.00% F
OFFSHORE ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Bank of Ireland	01524 691188	Capital Wm Direct	Instant	£10,000	7.00% Year
Standard & Securities BS	01770 807072	Instant Access	Instant	£50,000	7.00% Year
Cheltenham & Gloucester Ltd	01461 728885	Offshore 60	60 Day	£10,000	7.50% Year
Stratford & Sons	01461 700680	Offshore 90	90 Day	£50,000	8.00% Year
NATIONAL SAVINGS ACCOUNTS (gross)					
Investment Accounts			1 Month	£20	4.75% Year
			3 Months	£500	5.25% Year
			6 Months	£2,500	5.50% Year
			1 Year	£5,000	5.75% Year
			2 Year	£10,000	6.00% Year
			3 Year	£15,000	6.25% Year
			4 Year	£20,000	6.50% Year
			5 Year	£25,000	6.75% Year
			6 Year	£30,000	7.00% Year
			7 Year	£35,000	7.25% Year
			8 Year	£40,000	7.50% Year
			9 Year	£45,000	7.75% Year
			10 Year	£50,000	8.00% Year
			11 Year	£55,000	8.25% Year
			12 Year	£60,000	8.50% Year
			13 Year	£65,000	8.75% Year
			14 Year	£70,000	9.00% Year
			15 Year	£75,000	9.25% Year
			16 Year	£80,000	9.50% Year
			17 Year	£85,000	9.75% Year
			18 Year	£90,000	10.00% Year
			19 Year	£95,000	10.25% Year
			20 Year	£100,000	10.50% Year

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هذا من الأصل

Follow the sage and invest in another hobby



THE
JONATHAN
DAVIS
COLUMN

When Warren Buffett cannot find the stock opportunities he wants to invest in it could be time to think seriously about sitting out the rest of this bull market

This is the bad news for anyone who still wants to believe that the current bull market will go on for ever. Warren Buffett is playing a lot more bridge than he was.

By his own admission, this is not something the modern world's most accomplished stock market investor would be doing if share prices were not now so high. The chairman of Berkshire Hathaway confided to stockholders at his annual meeting this week that he is putting

in around 10 hours a week into his bridge, either at the card table or (his new hobby) on the internet. His long-standing partner - Charlie Munger - is also, I can reveal, playing a good deal of golf.

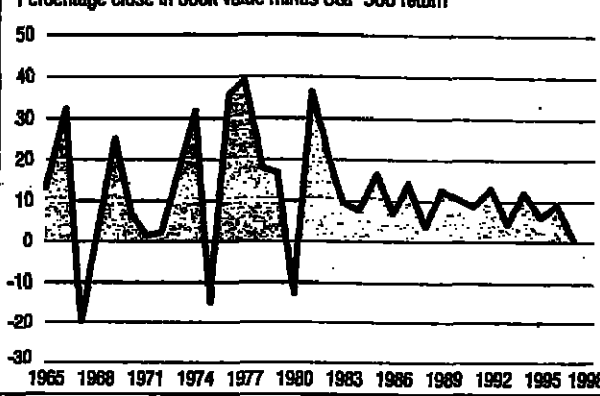
Well, you may ask, so what? At 67, Mr Buffett is now past conventional retirement age while his chum Mr Munger, at 73, is even older. Why shouldn't they be having a bit of fun, as long as the shareholders are happy with it - which, judging

by the ecstatic scenes at the annual meeting of Mr Buffett's company Berkshire Hathaway this week, they certainly are?

I can vouch for the fact that the annual gathering of the Buffett fans in his home town of Omaha, Nebraska, while always unconventional, has now become more of a pilgrimage than a shareholders' meeting. This year, more than 10,000 shareholders flew in from all round the world to watch a video and pay homage to the man who is routinely - and not without reason - described as the greatest stock market investor of the postwar period.

So great was the clamour to get a good seat in the sports stadium where the meeting was held that the first investor started queuing at 4.15am. By the time they opened the doors at 7am, the line of shareholders stretched more than a quarter of a mile around the vast car park. Mr Buffett himself was followed everywhere he went by a camera crew and treated more like a basketball star than the chairman of a large and successful diversified holding

Buffett's edge over the market
Percentage close in book value minus S&P 500 return



company - which is what, strictly speaking, he is.

The hoopla and ceremonial attending Mr Buffett's every doing has increased dramatically in the last two years and speaks volumes for the current state of popular enthusiasm for the stock market in the States, which is infectious but not without its disturbing aspects. (If you believe one recent survey, no fewer than 20 per cent of the vast new army of first-time mutual fund investors believe that returns from shares are guaranteed by the Federal Government.)

It is difficult to recall, visiting the States now, that it was only seven years ago, during its last recession, that the nation was in the throes of a crisis of confidence over what many saw as the impending Japanese takeover of their economy.

Mr Buffett himself is not joining in the general bull market euphoria. When quizzed, he sticks to a carefully worded formula about the level of the markets. Current market levels, he says, can be justified if two conditions continue to be met. One is that long-term interest

rates remain at or below their current level (6 per cent for the long-bond yield). The second is that Corporate America continues to earn the unprecedented returns on equity it has experienced over the past five years. How realistic are those conditions, in Buffett's view? Answer: not very. "Two big ifs" is what he called them this week.

Interest rates certainly don't seem to be his concern. He would not have bought \$6bn of long-dated Treasury bonds last year if he thought bond yields were seriously about to rise. That investment is a geared bet that interest rates will fall rather than rise. It is the second condition which worries Mr Buffett and his long-time partner Mr Munger more.

They have profited handsomely from the revival in US corporate profits in recent years, and the rise in the price that the market will pay for those profits. Mr Buffett's trademark holdings in consumer companies with strong franchises have soared in value. His investment in Coca-Cola

alone is now worth the best part of \$15bn.

But can the record level of profitability last? Short term, it is not impossible. A wise old bird like Mr Buffett also knows that bull markets have a life of their own in their later stages, and publicly he is not going to risk his hard-earned reputation for omniscience by trying to call the next downturn. But the odds against profits staying at current levels are quite long. As Mr Munger pointed out this week, returns on equity of 20 per cent per annum are 50 per cent above their long-run average. He and Mr Buffett think there is no margin of safety in current price levels, and are starting to act accordingly.

Last year Berkshire Hathaway started to trim its equity positions, albeit modestly, in favour of bonds and some more exotic investments, such as silver. Having made his name as a patient long-term accumulator of shares, for the past two years Mr Buffett has actually been a net seller of equities - a striking reversal of previous trends. His close mate Mr Munger

seemed to hint at one point that Mr Buffett's decision to dabble in the silver market owed as much to boredom as anything else. There is another way of looking at this, however. On the face of it, the so-called Sage of Omaha has had two quite outstanding years: +43 per cent in 1996 and +34 per cent in 1997. That, however, is only fractionally better than the US stock market as a whole over the same period. In relative terms, Mr Buffett's performance, as my chart shows, is nothing like as effortlessly superior as it once was.

That is hardly his fault: the amount of money he has to invest is now vast and the range of available opportunities is shrinking. The truth is that he needs a more testing climate in which to demonstrate his superior investment skills and a roaring bull market like the one we have had for the last couple of years is not an easy environment in which to sparkle. He is happy to sit back and enjoy his bridge while the bull thunders on, but he is certainly not in the retiring mood, just waiting for more profitable opportunities.

MONEY & ETHICS

Take a principled position in stocks

Eliminate the negative, accentuate the positive and you can meet both your ethical and your financial concerns. Iain Morse explains

local authorities managing funds on ethical guidelines is also significant: charities alone invest over £10bn this way. A growing number of local authority pension schemes also "screen" potential investments according to ethical criteria.

Tessa Tennant, head of research at NPI's Global Care Fund, thinks: "Ethical investment is becoming mainstream, no longer seen as cranky, or bad for your pocket."

Acting against environmental principles can cost companies and investors in them very dear, as Richard Singleton, a fund manager at Stewardship, points out: "Take pollution. Messy industries, are now having to clean up after themselves, in many cases, decades after they made money from a polluting process."

"There is long-term benefit both in environmental terms and for shareholders if a company can anticipate future regulatory changes on matters like pollution and build these into current operations. This may cost a little more now, but saves money later."

But how do we assess the ethical standards of a company? The Ethical Investment and Research Service (EIRIS), a charity which surveys more than 1,100 UK companies and Europe's largest 500 companies, measures their business activities against a wide range of ethical criteria. Providing an investment selection service both to private investors and fund managers, EIRIS has come up with a combination of both "negative" and "positive" criteria to determine how companies make the grade.

Karen Eldridge, who works at EIRIS, explains: "There's no exact definition of an ethical fund, except that ethical considerations

influence investment choice. Negative criteria amount to the avoidance of companies whose activities compromise the investor's ethical concerns. Positive criteria depend on identifying specific business activities which an investor wishes to support."

The positive and negative criteria used by EIRIS serve as a benchmark for ethical fund managers and are widely used to provide investment screening.

But according to Mr Singleton at Friends Provident: "Screening can hide companies with good intentions, simply because they are currently caught up in unapproved activities. Again, pollution is a case in point. Very few of the companies we invest in can claim to leave no pollution."

"The point is to find a management team who admit they have a problem but want to sort it out. By offering our support, we give them a positive reason to do so."

He points to one of Stewardship's current investments - the Go-Ahead Group, as a case in point. Operating both bus and train services, the company is committed to buying a new generation of urban buses which have fewer gas emissions. "This will cost more now but, in five or 10 years, I would expect them to be a preferred supplier of bus services in some inner cities," thinks Mr Singleton.

Examples like this underline the way that ethical funds can differ. Some rely on "screening" both to avoid and select given shares, others have in-house research teams and take a more active approach to reforming the way companies work.

One of the first steps in making ethical investments is to decide which set of business

activities you wish to avoid and which you want to invest into. Doing some homework will help you find the fund that most closely matches your ethical concerns.

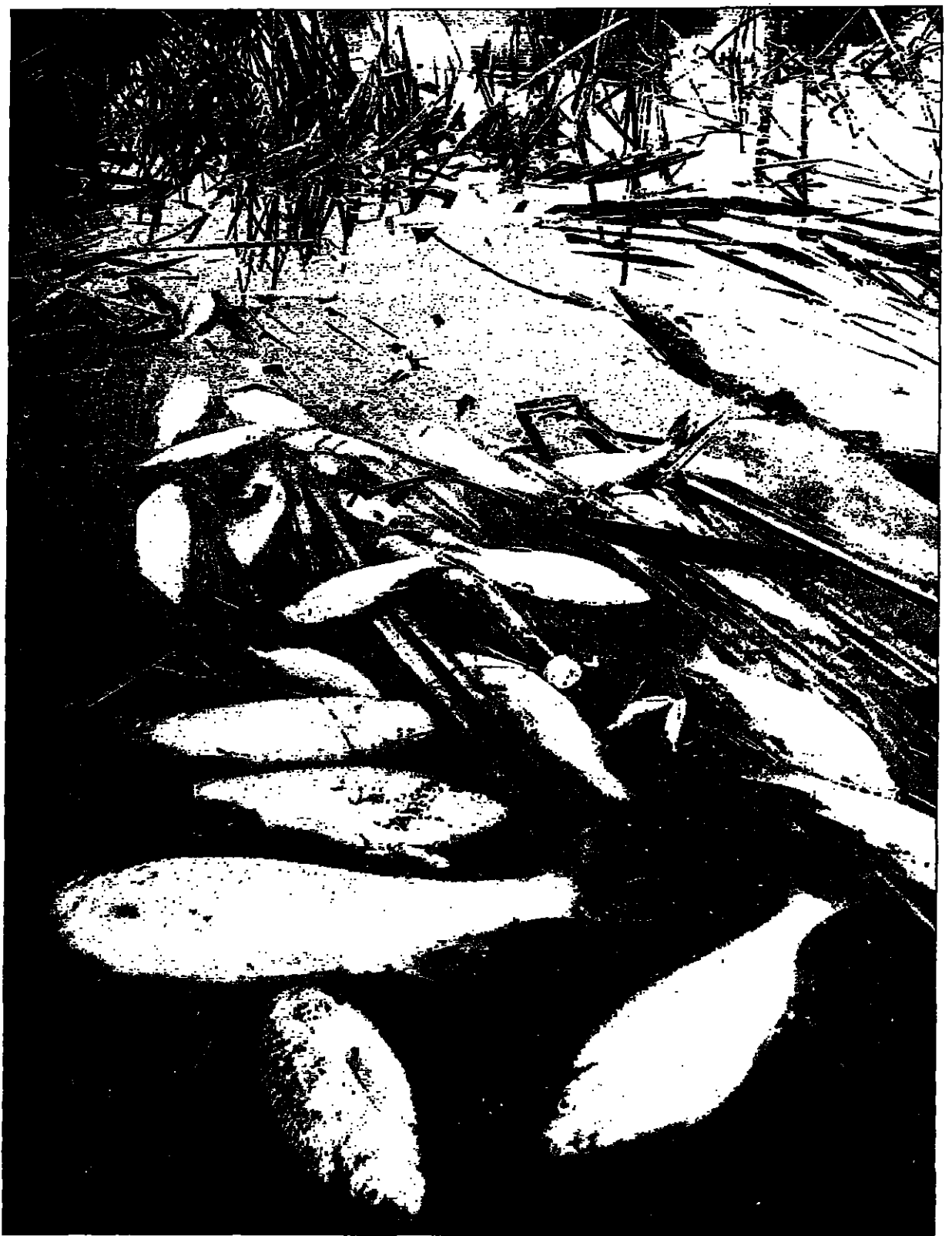
EIRIS's reference guide *Money & Ethics* assesses the main ethical funds in terms of both positive and negative criteria. But ethical providers will also supply free copies of their annual reports and prospectuses, which should detail both their investment philosophy and specific share holdings.

To order copies of *Money & Ethics*, contact EIRIS on 0171-735 1351.

The Independent has produced a free, 28-page *Guide to Ethical Finances*, written by Nic Cicutti, the paper's personal finance editor, and sponsored by Friends Provident. Call 0800 214487 or fill in the coupon on page 4.

What funds avoid:
Alcohol
Animal testing
Gambling
Greenhouse gases
Health and safety breaches
Human rights abuses
Intensive farming
Military involvement, MoD contracts
Nuclear power
Ozone depletion
Pesticides
Pornography
Roads and transport policy
Third World concerns
Tobacco
Tropical hardwood
Water pollution

What funds support:
Community involvement
Disclosure
Environmental initiatives
Equal Opportunities
Positive products and services



Downstream profits: Most ethical funds avoid serious polluters but some seek out firms with 'green' potential

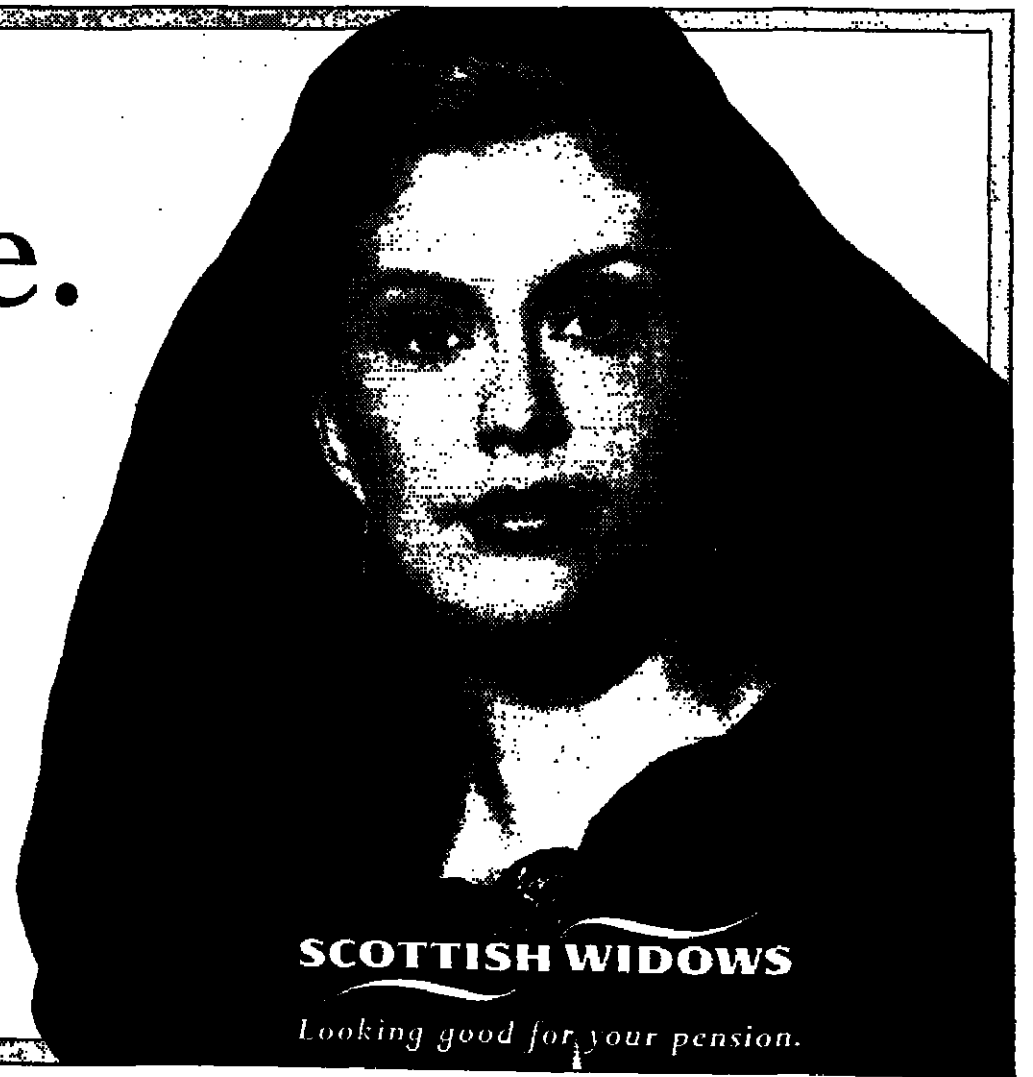
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With-profits that add up to reduce risk

As payouts have shrunk in recent years, with-profits endowments have come under attack for being inflexible and unintelligible. But they still find supporters among financial experts. In a two-page special report, Nic Cicutti explains how they work

Every year millions of people across Britain receive strange letters from their insurance companies, telling them how much their "bonuses" will be. These aren't the huge bounties handed out to City whizzkids but the far more mundane, yet ultimately far more important, sums that are attached to with-profits endowments.

It is on the basis of these annual bonuses, plus a final "terminal" – payout, made when a policy matures after 10, 15 or 25 years, that many of us hope to pay off our home loans, enjoy a decent income in retirement, or just receive a large lump sum.

The importance of bonus announcements cannot be underestimated. Until recently, more than 60 per cent of mortgage-holders have paid only the interest on their loans. They then made an additional monthly payment in an endowment.

Similarly, over 250,000 people with personal pension policies contribute to with-profits policies. Perhaps 750,000 investors – most of them elderly – have placed billions of pounds into with-profits bonds.

Yet, despite their seeming popularity (even today, 30 per cent of mortgage borrowers still favour them as a means of paying off their loans) endowments have gained a very dubious reputation in recent years. They are attacked as

impossible to understand, utterly inflexible and, worst of all, the amounts they pay out are said to be worth less and less – perhaps not even enough to redeem the mortgages they were there to pay off.

Yet they have their defenders, and not simply among the insurance companies which stand to gain from selling them. Amanda Davidson, a partner at Holden Meehan, a highly reputable firm of London independent financial advisers, says: "They may not be suitable for everyone, but I am quite prepared to recommend an endowment to someone. Indeed, I have one myself, along with a personal equity plan (PEP), as a means of paying my own mortgage."

So what exactly is a with-profits endowment? Essentially, it is a vehicle that allows individuals to invest in a range of stocks, shares and property

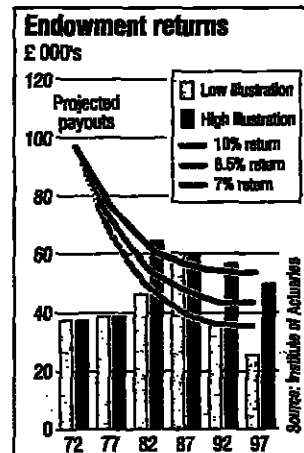
via a life company fund. In most cases, investors pay regular premiums into the fund over varying periods of time, although lump-sum payments into with-profits bonds are also possible.

The investment strategy of with-profit funds is not exceptionally risky – it generally involves between 50 to 60 per cent of a portfolio going into UK equities, some 20 per cent into fixed-interest investments, about 10 to 15 per cent into property, with the remainder placed in overseas stocks.

But unlike traditional equity-linked investments, where the value of a fund rises and falls directly in line with its underlying assets, with-profits funds are different. They involve three separate elements: a guaranteed sum, which pays out at maturity or when the policyholder dies; an annual (or "reversionary") bonus, plus a terminal bonus paid out when the policy matures.

The aim of this labyrinthine bonus system is to "smooth" the peaks and troughs of stock market investment. Once a bonus is attached to a policy it cannot be taken away, locking in value. This means that in the event of a stock market crash, policyholders should not see the value of their fund collapse.

Equally, it means that if markets race ahead, savers may not see all of that upside immediately.



Dodgy deals: Actuaries have calculated that one-fifth of investors are paying up to 20 per cent too much for second-hand policies

Only one careful owner...

The second-hand market for endowments is growing rapidly, but buyers still need to be cautious about prices

Investors who prefer the moderate risk profile of with-profit endowments do not have to start a long-term saving scheme themselves, or buy a with-profit bond.

Another option is to invest in a second-hand endowment, or "traded endowment policy" (TEP). Buying one is, in effect, a form of recycling: such policies are among a growing number sold by their previous owners instead of being surrendered back to the insurance company they were bought from in the first instance. The market for TEPs is now believed to be worth more than £250m annually, up from a few tens of millions just a few years ago.

The logic of selling an endowment instead of surrendering it is simple.

Doing so is likely to earn its holder anything up to 25 per cent more than an early surrender. But the price depends on the quality of the company and how long the policy has been in operation. Few prospective buyers will touch a policy that has run for less than seven years.

There are now more than a dozen companies, loosely flying under the banner of the Association of Policy Market Makers (APMM), which buy such policies. The price market-makers pay will depend on demand for a specific policy at that time, which means the amount paid can vary substantially.

Although market-makers hate having their time "wasted" by calculating a quote only for a seller to go elsewhere, it usually pays to shop around when disposing of an endowment.

There are firms prepared to "travel" the market to obtain the best price on policyholders' behalf, including Barons Investment Services, a firm based in Ilford, Essex. A "traveller" will receive commission of up to 3 per cent for the policy it sells on policyholders' behalf.

but you can ask if they will share some of that with you.

Alternatively, it is possible to auction a policy on the internet through Endowments Direct, subject to a £250 sales commission fee.

Conversely, the advantage of buying a TEP is that large chunks of the investment are guaranteed as annual bonuses that cannot be taken away, while the expensive set-up costs of a policy have already been met by the original owner. Maturing 25-year policies are paying up to 14 per cent compound annual gains, although 10 to 12 per cent is far more likely for those bought in the second-hand market.

One advantage of TEPs is that, because they have a maturity date, they can be used to plan for eventualities some years ahead, such as university costs.

Capital-gains tax (CGT) may be paid on some policies. But it is possible to place the ownership of a policy in more than one name, using each person's £6,800 exemption. Moreover, the Chancellor's announcement of a tapered CGT system should benefit TEP buyers, who are likely to retain their policies for several years.

However, last year the Institute of Actuaries (IoA), whose members calculate how much of a bonus to attach to policies, suggested that up to a fifth of private investors are being overcharged by between 15 and 20 per cent when they buy TEPs.

The IoA's stance was backed by Max Rosen, director of Securised Endowment Contracts. Mr Rosen's firm actually sells such policies but he wants tighter controls on the assumed rates of growth investors are given when they are buying TEPs.

Richard Ross, chairman of AAP, another market-maker, was quoted as saying: "The current price reflects the strength of demand and the weakness of supply. Market-makers give an execution-only service and provide no advice, leaving the investor to make his own, usually informed assessment, or rely on a financial adviser."

— Nic Cicutti

Endowments Direct: www.endowments-direct.co.uk
APMM: 0171-739 3949; Barons Investment Services: 0181-518 1218

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The bonus at the end of the term

As stocks scale new peaks, life companies are cutting back the annual bonuses on their with-profits plans. Nic Cicutti wonders if terminal bonuses can make up the difference

Annual bonuses, crucial as they are, are not the only component of final maturity values. The terminal payment, which is meant to reflect stock market performance, can be worth as much as 60 per cent of the total fund after 25 years, though this falls to 20-30 per cent for 10-year policies.

Terminal bonuses can vary, thereby adding considerable uncertainty as to the potential value of a policy. Moreover, the interplay between final and terminal bonus can be even more baffling. This year's bonus ritual, where life companies announce how much they will pay out to typical policyholders, is an example.

Ostensibly, most companies that declared their bonuses for 1998 will be paying out more than the previous year (see table). Among the biggest leaps is GA Life, whose payout at maturity on a £50 monthly investment over 25 years goes from £114,554 to £120,784. Yet GA's annual bonus to with-profits savers dropped by 0.5 per cent, leaving the terminal bonus to make up the difference. Similarly, Norwich Union, whose payout this year might be £100,247 on a policy with similar terms, up £7,068 on 1997, is cutting annual bonuses on its pension policies from 7.5 per cent to 6.75 per cent.

The reason for this seeming contradiction – cuts in annual bonuses at a time of soaring stock markets – is that company actuaries, who set the rates paid to policyholders, measure the amount they can guarantee against the yield on long-term gilts, government loan stock.

Because these plunged last year to a low of 6.25 per cent, not seen since the 1970s, actuaries no longer feel confident enough to guarantee high annual bonuses every year. Instead, the actuaries are giving more in maturity payouts – which are not guaranteed.

According to the Institute of Actuaries, life offices have only been able to guarantee high annual bonuses because of unusually high investment growth right back to 1974, when stock markets hit their nadir in the midst of the oil-price shock.

The low yield on gilts reflects a belief, shared by actuaries, that as long as inflation stays low, investment

returns from stocks and shares can be expected to do the same.

Nick Dumbreck, a leading figure at the Institute of Actuaries (IoA), said recently: "I think it is absolutely right that companies should be reducing bonuses at this time. It doesn't mean savers are getting less overall – they are just getting less now."

Some actuaries argue that annual bonuses should be even lower. Peter Nowell, chairman of the IoA's life board, added: "My concern would be if life offices tried to keep their annual bonuses right up, which might have an impact on their financial strength. Annual bonuses ought to be below gilt yields."

How much the companies are paying out

Company	1998	1997	1996
Co-operative Insurance Society	£97,366	£95,116	not known
Commercial Union	£108,210	£105,727	£103,659
Friends Provident	£106,188	£103,719	£103,659
GA Life	£120,784	£114,554	£111,887
Norwich Union	£100,247	£93,179	£92,535
Prudential	£106,278	£101,215	£101,214
Scottish Friendly	£90,301	£87,156	£87,156
Scottish Life	£103,325	£100,532	£100,703
Scottish Mutual	£108,544	£105,306	not known
Scottish Provident	£94,820	£91,861	£94,743
Scottish Widows	£107,941	£106,271	£104,671
Standard Life	£107,379	£102,673	£104,671
Timbridge Wells	£106,573	£106,751	£106,178
Median	£106,278	£102,673	£103,659

Payouts are for a 25-year policy, made aged 50 next birthday, contributing £50 a month. Source: Moneyfacts

Commit yourself to a more flexible plan

One of the biggest criticisms against endowments is their inflexibility. Because the vast majority of with-profits endowments involve heavy up-front charges, anyone who wants to cash them in during the first few years may receive back less than they have actually paid in.

Recent figures from the Personal Investment Authority, the frontline watchdog, suggest that up to 30 per cent of policyholders may surrender their policies within the first three years.

Millions of people forced to do so for perfectly legitimate reasons, typically because of unemployment or divorce, have lost out. Worse, critics claim that high payouts given to those whose policies go through to maturity are only possible because of the high drop-out rate in the early years.

The heavy criticism has forced many companies to improve the amounts they pay out to those who surrender policies in the early years. Andrew Black, marketing manager at Standard Life, an insurer which for years has paid out some of the highest amounts to people who cash their policies in early, says: "It is true that some contracts are inflexible, but it's also the case that many people surrendered when they did not need to, such as when they were moving house."

Standard Life is one of a small group of companies attempting to offer more flexible endowments, which allow contributions to be raised or lowered and where reviews every five years allow those who are saving to pay off a loan to see how close they are to meeting that target.

— Nic Cicutti

Adopt a policy of no surrender



Between 50,000 and 60,000 investors who sell their with-profits plans back to insurers early do better on the TEP market. But life offices seem reluctant to advise their customers of this. Nic Cicutti reports

Market-makers in traded endowment policies (TEPs) want life assurance companies to tell customers about the existence of the second-hand endowment market.

They say that people who surrender their policies early, rather than waiting for them to mature, might easily do better by selling them on to a new owner. According to Christopher Dobie of Beale Dobie, a policy market-maker, prices on the second-hand market are, on average, 15 per cent higher than the often pitiful surrender values offered by life companies.

For people who buy the policies, the average rate of return is 10 per cent a year, using 1997 maturity values as a guide. But few companies alert policyholders to the existence of the market. Only two – Norwich

Union and Clerical Medical – routinely inform all policyholders wishing to surrender policies of the TEP alternative, says Tim Villiers, director of the Association of Policy Market Makers (APMM).

Clerical Medical includes the APMM's telephone number in the literature sent to surrendering policyholders; Norwich Union sends the association's brochure, which lists policy market-makers and details the types of policies in which they deal.

Other companies will sometimes reveal the information on a pot-luck basis – depending on which person deals with the surrender request, or make vague reference to the existence of the market in the small print.

Some, notably Standard Life, are wary of TEPs and will only acknowledge their existence to people who specifically ask for information. "We have some concerns about this market," says Andrew Black, marketing manager. "It's not really an issue for the seller, who may

indeed get a good price. But there is evidence that people who buy them are paying quite considerable premiums to their real value."

Mr Black concedes that this may be partly due to the perceived additional appeal of policies from mutual insurers – of which Standard Life is the largest – to carpetbaggers ("although people who say we're a likely candidate for conversion don't know what they're talking about").

But the main cause for concern is that second-hand prices relate to

past payouts, rather than reflecting the likelihood of lower payouts in the future, Mr Black says.

"This depends on where you think the responsibility lies," counters Mr Villiers. "If the payout is less than the asset-backing of the policy, does the moral duty of the life office not lie with the original policyholder? The most common reason for them deciding to sell is because they need the cash. The companies should make sure they get as much as possible."

Mr Villiers also dismisses Mr Black's claim that the policies are too expensive. "They get a jolly good return, especially considering it is such a safe investment."

Policies suitable for sale on the second-hand market should be at least five years old and have a surrender value of at least £1,000.

According to Mr Dobie, the value of traded policies has jumped from £5m to about £250m over the eight years since Beale Dobie entered the business. But research by his partner,

David Beale, indicates that as much as £800m-worth of the policies offered for surrender each year would do better on the second-hand market.

This means that between 50,000 and 60,000 of the people surrendering direct to insurers would do better to sell to new policyholders, he says. "But most people surrendering aren't financially acute. About 85 per cent of all endowment policies are sold to support a mortgage and they are often their holders' only investment."

"The only solution we can see is for the companies to tell them. Every life office knows whether they would do better on the traded endowment market, but they don't say so. We've been saying to life offices for ages – at least two years – 'Come on chaps, why not tell people?' But, far too many do absolutely nothing."

"We've obviously got a vested interest in keeping the policy going," says Liz Watson of Norwich Union. "But we are also keen to look after the interests of all policyholders, including those wishing to surrender."

The Association of British Insurers gives information about the second-hand market in its free leaflet on surrender values, but says individual life companies must make up their own minds.

The Association of Policy Market Makers: 0171-739 3949; Beale Dobie: 01621 851133; ABI: 0171-600 3333. This article first appeared in 'Bloomberg Money' magazine.

Home truths about mortgage options

Comm: yourse' to a mor flexible plan

It is the fear that with-profits endowment bonus rates may continue to fall in years to come that has gradually swung the argument against them, particularly in the mortgage arena, where straightforward repayment options – paying off a varying mixture of capital and interest – are gaining in popularity.

The argument in favour of repayment mortgages is simple: you are guaranteed to pay off the loan. Moreover, it is claimed, one of the points in favour of endowments, their portability from mortgage to mortgage, unlike repayments, is less strong than at first sight.

Phillip Cartwright, a director at London and Country Mortgages, a home-loan broker, points out that even after a few years, a considerable portion of a borrower's debt will be paid off with a repayment loan. Taking a £100,000 loan over 25 years, at today's standard rate of 8.7 per cent, capital worth

Can endowment mortgages compare with repayment schemes which guarantee to pay off loans, or PEP/ISA plans that can offer investors tax advantages?

£9,821 would be repaid after seven years and £17,055 after 10 years. If a person wanted to move to a new home at the same price, their next mortgage would take that repayment into account. Indeed, the rest of the loan would be paid off in just the same amount of time, with the same monthly payments as before.

While monthly repayments might rise if a larger mortgage is taken out, the same would apply with "portable" endowments: monthly premiums would go up. What is more, policyholders would usually be forced to start a new policy, paying a fresh set of initial charges, which such a large proportion of premiums out of endowments in early years.

Mr Cartwright says: "I have always been sceptical of the so-called portability argument in favour of endowments. Repayment mortgages can be used flexibly and can be more effective than endowments in the early years."

However, defenders of endowment-linked mortgages point out that they have the potential not only to pay off a loan but also to leave borrowers with a lump sum to enjoy at maturity. Nor are combined payments that dissimilar to straight repayment loans.

Amanda Davidson, at

Holden Meehan, calculates that a 25-year repayment loan of £100,000, at an 8.7 per cent interest rate, would involve net monthly payments of £795.77 a month, plus a further £14.76 a month in life insurance, a total of about £810.53. By contrast, an interest-only loan would cost £692.38 which, when added to an endowment of £164, would cost £856 a month.

Ms Davidson says: "You do pay more with an endowment. But as interest rates fall, costs begin to even out so that when rates are about 7.5 per cent, the cost of an endowment loan is roughly the same as a repayment one."

The difference lies in potential returns. With a repayment loan, you are guaranteed to pay off the loan and no more. With an endowment, the minimum guaranteed amount might be just £52,200. However, if investments grow at just 5 per cent a year, the amount paid out would be £82,900.

If investments grow at 7.5 per cent, returns would reach £117,000. With growth of 10 per cent a year, returns would be £168,000. For the original £100,000 loan to be paid back, returns would have to average 6.3 per cent. Ms Davidson says: "It is not too unrealistic to assume growth on this scale."

Are endowments still a worthwhile investment in the age of personal equity plans (PEPs) and new-style Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs)? Ms Davidson calculates that, assuming a 9 per cent growth rate, to pay off the same loan would require monthly payments of £143 into a PEP/ISA, including life cover. This would raise the total cost of monthly mortgage payments to £835, less than an endowment. Moreover, returns on PEPs and ISAs are not subject to taxation on the underlying life fund, unlike endowments. They are, however, more risky.

— Nic Cicutti

The Corporate Bond PEP

The low cost high income PEP

Source: LGIM (01.05.98). The running yield of the Fixed Interest Trust was 6.8% (6.2% redemption yield) as at 1 May 1998. Past performance is not necessarily a guide to future performance. Both capital and income values may go down as well as up and you may not get back the amount invested. All comparisons of cost apply to PEPs investing wholly in Unit Trusts. Tax assumptions are those currently applicable and are subject to statutory change. The value of tax relief will depend on your individual circumstances. Full written details are available on request. Legal & General (Direct) Limited, Registered in England No. 2702060. Registered Office: Temple Court, 11 Queen Victoria Street, London EC4N 4TR. Representative only of the Legal & General marketing group, members of which are regulated by the Personal Investment Authority and IMRO for the purposes of recommending, advising on and selling life assurance and investment products bearing Legal & General's name. A member of AUTP. Investors should be aware that unlike cash in a Deposit Account the capital value of investments in Fixed Interest Trusts is not guaranteed. The Government have announced that contributions can only be made to PEPs until April 1999. From that date a new set of privileged savings vehicles, the Individual Savings Accounts (ISAs) will be available.

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Traditional life policy bonuses

Company	Annual bonuses				Terminal bonuses	
	bonus on sum assured	1998%	1997%	1996%	accumulated bonus	1998%
Scottish Widows	2.50	2.50	2.50	4.50	4.50	9.5-12.6
Clerical Medical	2.50	2.50	2.50	4.50	4.50	9.5-12.6
Prudential	3.25	3.25	3.25	6.25	6.75	% based on sum assured
GA Life	3.25	3.25	3.25	6.25	6.75	% based on sum assured
Scottish Friendly (tax-free)	4.00	4.00	4.00	7.00	7.00	4.5 for each full year
Scottish Life (tax-free)	2.25	2.25	2.25	4.50	4.50	22.5-100
Scottish Mutual	2.00	2.00	2.25	4.00	4.00	37-172
Scottish Widows	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Life	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Mutual	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Widows	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Life	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Mutual	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Widows	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Life	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Mutual	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Widows	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Life	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Mutual	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Widows	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
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Scottish Widows	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Life	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7-182
Scottish Mutual	2.00	2.25	2.50	4.00	4.50	7

ملكو من الأصل

Country life calls, but can you bear to share your home?

Just about everyone living in a city has played the "what if" game of selling up and moving to the country. Rambling old rectories, farmhouses in acres of land, mills in isolated rural bliss... it can be afforded if the house really sells for that much.

But, unless urban life is swapped for commuter life, getting away altogether usually means, at the very least, a drop in income, and the "what ifs" are not just about where to live - but how.

None of these considerations will deter anyone determined to turn idle day-dreaming into reality, and country estate agents are more than familiar with people who have set their hearts on a change of lifestyle.

Redundancy packages, part-time working and home-based offices have all made it an

Leaving the city and giving up the rat race to move to the countryside is all very well as a daydream - but the reality can be too much for some people, as Penny Jackson finds out. She talks to two women who had what it takes to make the good life

easier proposition, but even the best financial advice can fall short of the expenses incurred in doing up old and neglected buildings - however glorious their potential.

Extra injections of cash become a necessity, and money-making schemes have to appear on the agenda. So what could be better than making the house work for itself in the time-honoured way with bed and

breakfast? Once the territory of the retired, it is now being invaded by people who are more likely to have discussed B&Bs with their stockbroker than with the tourist board.

They know enough of the country hotel market to realise the appeal of old buildings with stylish rooms. They also know that B&B no longer means a semi on the seaford with net curtains and a landlady who bars

guests from returning until six in the evening.

Taking in guests was the last thing Judy Bryant had on her mind when she moved to Devon from Hertfordshire. Her husband swapped his architectural practice for a 17th century cottage in a hamlet near Totnes. "It needed a great deal of work. We extended the cottage and had to make the garden from scratch. We stood back and looked at the house to decide if it would work as a B&B. We put plumbing in all the bedrooms, and it helps that we have our own bit, so that we are not always tripping over guests."

Planning consent was not necessary as Black Ness Cottage does not take more than six guests. It is in an idyllic spot on the Dart Valley trail and picks up holidaymakers who want

peace and to be within striking distance of busy Dartmouth.

"We were pretty sure that it would appeal to certain people, and the money we earn has meant that we can afford to stay here. It is an integral part of our budget. But the rewards are far more than financial," says Judy. "And the guests add another dimension. It is pretty isolated down here."

At Marchand Petit estate agents in Kingsbridge, Devon, they know the romance of life in the country can dwindle fast. Perhaps income dries up and refurbishment expenses cannot be met, or it may be that the whole project becomes wearisome. Families who fondly imagine that isolation is as much fun in the winter as the summer learn a hard lesson.

The firm has been dealing with a not untypical case of a Home Counties couple who sold their house for a good price and bought an old farm with plans to develop cottages on the land into a holiday business. However, they found themselves cut off with no bus services and constantly taxing their children about, and the strain became too much for the marriage.

The price of property is a temptation. A detached stone house in seven acres with a self-contained wing near Kingsbridge is for sale at £310,000 through Stags in Exeter. A seven-bedroom country guest house in wooded grounds with extra holiday accommodation near Okehampton is on the market for £350,000, while a farmhouse near Barnstaple with a cottage and outbuilding in 19 acres had an asking price of just over £300,000.

Nicola Checkley, of Stags, says that there has been growing interest from people in their forties for this kind of property. But you can't ensure a regular income from just any house in a lovely part of the country. When Jeannie Allnutt decided to use her redundancy money as a journalist to set up a B&B business she was saved from a terrible mistake by the local tourist board.

"We had found a perfect house in West Devon but were advised that it was too remote to pick up any passing trade. We had always wanted to restore an



Devon-set: Judy Bryant with guests Caroline Wood (left) and Anne Sharon at Black Ness Cottage, which she has made a successful B&B. Photograph: Susannah Binney/Apex

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How to care for your pad: don't be a laggard

If spring cleaning means trudging up to the loft to store your winter clothes, you can do yourself an enormous favour by having a good gander while you are up there.

Should your insulation be the loose-fill variety, note whether boxes or other heavy objects have been stacked on top. "The insulation works by trapping air. If the fill is compacted, there is less room for this to occur," says Malcolm Hollis, a chartered surveyor.

One-inch-high insulation that started out in life as a healthy 4in tall is inefficient and wasteful. Such loose fill can also scatter, and cover electric wiring. Mr Hollis cautions that power cables should be on top of the joist, not surrounded by "polystyrene insulation, which degrades the plastic wire insulation, causing the plastic to become brittle". The result is unsafe, and degraded wires may require professional replacement.

If you are replacing or renewing fibre or mineral blanket insulation, allow extra length for the water tank. "My loft is lagged to the eyeballs," says Nick Doak, press officer with Lloyds of London. "In most lofts, the insulating material is unrolled to stop at the edge of the water tank. We extended ours over the top of the tank so it traps and holds heat beneath it."

Treat yourself to a thorough examination of the water tank and pipes. Quite a few of them are begging to burst, waiting only for a sufficiently cold winter. Many a water tank is left to fend for itself,

Early summer is a good time to check the loft insulation and buy your water tank a new jacket, suggests Robert Lieberman - and to renew your respect for the inherent viciousness of ladders

either lacking a cover completely or making do with plastic sheeting or makeshift pieces of old tarpaulin draped over the top.

Most tanks are a standard size and still carry labels providing their vital statistics. Off-the-peg covers are cheap and readily available. Matching insulating jackets are also on the market.

Pay little attention to the photo on the packaging, which invariably portrays a water tank dressed to kill, adorned in a snug, perfectly fitting down overcoat. One great, if lesser known, British ritual involves trying to get the jacket to fit as neatly over the water tank as in the photo. It never does, but a not-quite-completely-insulated water tank is infinitely preferable to one that is inadequately covered or uncovered. And don't overlook the smaller central-heating water tank, which requires similar attention.

At the other end of the water tank, the boiler itself needs "no special seasonal treatment", according to a spokesperson for Corgi - the Council for Registered Gas Installers. "The most important thing is to have gas appliances checked annually, and it

is illegal to do it yourself." Corgi installers have the proper doodads as well as knowledge and experience. In addition to tinkering with the appliance itself, Corgi-registered installers have portable meters to test the gas pressure at the specific appliance and in the entire system. The job isn't finished until it has been verified safe.

The queue for plumbers at this time of year is almost non-existent. When the first cold spell arrives next winter, many home owners will simultaneously discover that their systems are faulty. Moral: get the repair man in soon, while the getting is good.

Now is also the season for more ambitious jobs - new carpets, sanding or replacing floors, painting the exterior and retilling the roof.

Renew your respect for the inherent viciousness of ladders. DIYers, ladders and casualty departments have a natural affinity for one another at this time of year. And any work involving electricity - including degraded loft wiring - is inherently dangerous.

Richard Evans, assistant director at Aon insurance brokers, recommends contacting your insurer before erecting

your teeth and smile. Unless you are doing it for pin money you have to keep improving the building with a view to the eventual sale value.

Can any house, though, be worth the stress of dealing with the public? She responds confidently: "Apart from some boat thieves and a flash group from Chelsea in a white Mercedes who disappeared in the middle of the night, they are."

Black Ness Cottage: 01803 722467; The Old Forge: 01803 862174.

scaffolding or contemplating any other "material fact". Using a gas-fired torch to burn off accumulated grunge on floorboards constitutes a material fact.

"The standard cleaning job for us is spring cleaning for typical home owners," says Julia Villalante, owner of Maison Maids, a domestic cleaning agency in Thames Ditton, Surrey. "A real pukka cleaning job includes rubbing the walls down, shampooing carpets and cleaning skirting boards, picture rails and hard-to-reach places, such as behind the loo pipes. Many customers don't want all of that done."

Many people certainly don't want to pay for cleaning work that they deem to be inessential. Indeed, I know one home owner who doesn't even begin contemplating the duster until his dust has turned to tumbleweed.

However, economies can be false even in seemingly ordinary house-cleaning. "If grouting in the bathroom isn't cleaned regularly, you reach a point where it can't be cleaned and you have to replace it, so it is more costly in the long run," says Mr Villalante.

And what about his own water tank? "It's well lagged. Years ago, I had a relative whose tank burst, and I saw how disastrous that was. It's the first thing we did when we bought our property nearly 10 years ago," he says.

Maison Maids: 0181-398 4300; Corgi: 01256 372200; Aon: 0171-705 7444; Malcolm Hollis: 07000 127000.

هكذا من الأصل

Have some 'sarf respect'

London house hunters can pick up a bargain, if they're willing to head into Del Boy territory. By Fiona Brandhorst

When your salary won't buy you a piece of London in one of its trendy "villages", it's time to take a look at cheaper and, let's face it, less appealing parts of town. Forget the Tube, noodle bars and stand-up comedy, start thinking BR, Star Burger and Sky TV at the local pub. It's hard to imagine Plumstead and Peckham doing what Brixton and Clapham have done over the past few years, but there's a hungry bunch of house-hunters out there. Find a quiet backwater with a row of period cottages ripe for renovation, and you have a conservation area in the making.

Take Peckham, the poor relation in currently booming south London. After suffering for years under its Del Boy image, it is now in the throes of a massive regeneration programme. But it is the property prices and transport links to the City and West End that are bringing new buyers into the area.

Trains from Peckham (zone two) take nine minutes to London Bridge, where the Jubilee Line Tube extension is scheduled to open a station next spring. By changing on to the Tube at London Bridge, it should be possible to be in Canary Wharf or Green Park from Peckham in under 20 minutes.

Lisa Sheard, from the estate agents Charterhouse, believes pockets of Peckham will have their day in the not-so-distant future. "People have done their homework and know what roads they want to buy in." Buyers as well as sellers have been pleasantly surprised by its rise in popularity. Prices start at £80,000 for an unmodernised three-bedroom Victorian house. Demand is, not surprisingly, outstripping supply, pushing up prices further, especially in the leafy lanes of Nunhead.

Richard Lee, from Acorn estate agents, is seeing a lot of young professionals coming south of the river from north London, where they have been



Green London: Deptford may not be everyone's first choice of address, but more people are turning on to its charms

Photograph: Philip Meech

priced out of the market. "We're also getting the overspill from Clapham, Camberwell and Dulwich." Well-established conservation areas such as Holly Grove and Highshore Road are only minutes from down-town Peckham Rye station. Here, two-up, two-down cottages sell for around £110,000. Girdlers Cottage, a one-bedroom Grade II listed property in Choumert Road, was recently sold through the Halifax for just under £100,000.

"Cheerfully grimy in parts," is how *The New London Property Guide 98/99* describes Deptford, a mere 10cm to the right of Peckham in an A to Z. While Peckham may be world famous for the Trotter family, a tavern in Deptford was the scene of Christopher Marlowe's murder in 1593. More importantly for house-hunters, the area is set to end the 1990s on a high as communications to central London and the Docklands take a leap forward: the East London Line at nearby New Cross has reopened; the extension of the Docklands Light Railway to Deptford Creek opens next

year; and the new Jubilee Line station at London Bridge will be a seven-minute journey from Deptford.

As always in these inner-city enclaves, the most pleasant roads border a piece of green, in this case Deptford Park. Here, three-bedroom Victorian terraces start at around £90,000, but scarcity is increasing their values. You're more likely to find a former local authority property if you're not tempted by one of the new developments down by the river.

Jasper Bark, a writer and performer, lives with his wife Veronica, a PR account director, in an Eighties three-bedroom, ex-council townhouse in the heart of Deptford. They bought it in March for around £80,000. "We wanted to buy an old, ramshackle place, but we realised we didn't have the time, resources or inclination to do it up."

Their love affair with this former naval town started a few years ago, when they were renting nearby. "Its architecture, community feel and great heritage are the reasons why we stayed," Deptford High Street,

on the Greenwich and Deptford history trail, has been face-lifted by regeneration schemes. It's a true mix of cultures, with halal butchers, a pawnbroker and a Chinese acupuncturist sitting alongside a typical London street market twice a week. "It's a cross between a scene from Dickens and an Arabian bazaar," adds Mr Bark.

Trundle a few stops further south to Sydenham, and you will have left behind the inner city. While not exactly known for its nightlife, it does have a growing reputation for salvage and second-hand furniture yards. The zone three train service into Waterloo East (19 minutes) and London Bridge (15 minutes) will also link into the new Jubilee Line. George Proctor, an estate agent, is selling a two-bedroom Victorian cottage in Adamstrill Road, a short walk to the station, for £95,000. A double-fronted Victorian cottage in the conservation area of Halifax Street, with two bedrooms and a study, is for sale at £110,000.

Leytonstone in east London has seen a huge demand for property in recent months, but

it's not just the Central Line Tube that's making it popular. "That's always been a bonus," says Mike Moore of agents Spicer McColl, "but it's access to the M1, M25, M11 and Stansted and City airports that people want." Prices are between £75,000 and £120,000 for a three-bedroom Victorian house within walking distance of the Tube.

But for seriously cheap property, turn to Plumstead. Tracy Lockett, a graphic designer, was born in Deptford but went east of her roots, a few miles along the Thames to Plumstead Common, where she decided to buy a house earlier this year. The two-bedroom Victorian terrace "with fireplaces and sash windows but needing redecoration" cost £70,000. "I paid £10,000 more for the view over a park," says Ms Lockett.

Kathy Davies, from the agents Mann and Co, believes the Millennium project at Greenwich has put Plumstead on the map. "People who can't afford Greenwich are coming down the river to us." Three-

bedroom period houses on the borders of Plumstead Common, a 15-minute walk from the station, will cost a maximum of £100,000 and start at around £75,000. Going by these figures, Ms Lockett has made a good investment. If convenience rather than a view is a priority, a two-bedroom double-fronted Victorian house minutes from Plumstead station (zone four) is on the market with Mann and Co for just £57,995.

Carpetbaggers of the property world need to study their A to Zs and go walkabout, preferably on a sunny day - dingy backwaters need to be seen in the best light. If you can get there before the estate agents start moving in, you'll have all the time in the world to watch your investment grow.

The New London Property Guide 98/99 is published by Mitchell Beazley (0171-581 9393). Agents: Charterhouse, 0171-252 9444; Acorn, 0171-771 6777; Halifax, 0181-299 3711; George Proctor, 0181-778 9699; Spicer McColl, 0181-558 4021; Mann & Co, 0181-854 1181.



PENNY JACKSON

A smart move in London

There are few addresses in the world with the kudos of Eaton Square, SW1. In a survey last year, leading London estate agents voted it the top location for houses and flats. In the smartest square in the smartest part of London many of the owners are too grand to even want their presence mentioned, and they don't move that often.

But now there is a chance to buy not only a new apartment, but one that takes the letterhead of No.1 Eaton Square. Four of the Grade II houses have been taken apart and rebuilt as 13 apartments by Grosvenor Estate Holdings. The Regency facade is of course untouched. So far the main interest is coming from the UK and from Americans already living in London. Apartments on 75-year leases start at £1.25m up to £3.25m, while those on 20-year leases are in the region of £500,000. WA Ellis and George Trollope are the selling agents.

A good address in London comes pretty high in the list of priorities for those coming to work in the capital from abroad. It is understandable why they should want to be in South Kensington rather than Stockwell, but if greedy landlords are overpricing their property - as Jacqueline Ironside, a letting agent suggests - then perhaps foreign tenants should take a less conservative view of where they live.

She says that a compromise has to be reached with the landlords in the end, since commuting is "too squalid, too expensive and too time-consuming to be a sensible option".

Since most London workers have to put up with commuter life to some degree, what better way for foreigners to get to know the real city than travelling on the Northern Line every day? Are they so timid that they cannot tell the central London landlords where to go and discover the pleasures of unfashionable London for themselves? Few people who have found themselves living in odd quarters of Paris or newly gentrifying parts of Madrid have any regrets.

The greatest problem facing estate agents is not having enough to sell. For the past year at least they have been urging tentative vendors to get into the market before it is too late. Sooner rather than later is the cry. Trouble is, unless you are buying as well, all those people who waited to sell have done rather well.

Seavills Research, for instance, sees more growth in the South East, about 10 per cent next year. Owners with a good property in, say, Cambridge who were rushed into selling early last year might have lost out on as much as 25 per cent. Bidwells now have five buyers bidding for a Cambridge rectory well above the £700,000 asking price. They have 50 or 60 others waiting in the wings, so what could similar vendors expect in six months or more?

Up, up and away to the high life

It's true that we are all in the gutter, yet some of us are looking at the stars. But for some the stars are definitely much closer. The vogue for apartment life has a big hold on British cities and with industrial buildings, schools and stations rapidly undergoing transformation into living spaces, the gutter is looking quite lovely these days. So why is living at altitude alluring?

Dieter Rolph fell in love with his Barbican flat at first sight despite the fact that he and partner Stephen Baldwin were looking for a suburban house with a garden at the time.

Their 29th floor flat in the heart of the city is surely as far away from suburbia as it is possible to get, yet its bucolic atmosphere appeals to Dieter. "It's a unique place to live, like living in a village community."

Does the hustle and bustle of city life ever intrude? "It's so quiet, particularly at weekends. On Fridays there's a queue coming out of the car park as people leave for their weekend retreats," says Dieter, who is surprised by the number of families he meets in the lift.

The high-flying home has other perks in addition to wonderful light and views. "Residents automatically become members of the Barbican association, with concessions to cinema and theatre tickets and there's even a good restaurant," says Dieter, who has adjusted to life in the clouds although friends can be nervous. "They come round and say they can't bear to stand by the window, but after 10 minutes they eventually venture outside."

High-rise apartment dwelling is taking a new hold in Britain. Aside from great light and views, there are other perks.

By Ginetta Vedrickas

Balconies line the flat's entire length, giving Dieter a chance to indulge his love of gardening, although it is a test seeing which plants survive the wind. The elements are keenly felt inside the flat too: "The block sways, making the walls creak and the lamps swing."

Dieter thinks they'll stay in the flat for a while longer but has his heart set on a traditional garden for the future: "We've an outside table but the wind is restrictive and opportunities for candlelit dinners are one in a million."

Pursuit of romance may not be the only incentive for moving, as yearly service charges increase from £4,000 to £7,000 within the next two years.

The Barbican flats were built in the 1970s. Originally a council estate, most of the flats are privately owned, with a few lower-level flats remaining in local authority ownership. Dieter and Stephen's flat reflects their love of modernism and their environment is suitably chic, proving that tower block and concrete is once again fashionable and Victoriana currently has the kudos of stone cladding.

Reading the blurb for apartment developments sprouting in every nook and cranny throughout the capital is enough to rouse the most dormant buyer. These are not mere homes.

They are "living and working under one roof" environments designed for "discerning buyers with hectic lifestyles". Buy one and you too can live in "tomorrow's world today". If the adspoke is not exhausting enough, most developments offer extras which invariably include the misnomer, "leisure facilities". But do the computerised images echo reality? Who are these toned, industrious singles ascending wall-climbing lifts through tropical gardens to their atrium-set apartments?

After getting divorced and staying with friends for a spell, John Tempest was first to buy one of 32 flats at Westminster Bridge House, a former British Telecom office building in Waterloo, London. How does the bachelor pad compare with his former Wandsworth home? "I can get in early and work late, which is ideal if you're single," says John, who now walks to work in Covent Garden, where he is a recruitment consultant.

John bought his two-bedroom home for £130,000 before the development was completed so had little idea, apart from computer images, of what it would eventually look like. Service charges at the Barratt development are around £1,200 a year, but apart from underground car parking and security

there are no extras. Was John tempted to choose a development with more amenities? "I didn't want porters because, apart from the cost, it would feel like living in a hotel. I belong to a health club so I don't need those facilities," he adds.

Some developments offer perks to those able to exchange quickly. At Metro Central in Elephant & Castle, London, fast-movers can choose from a range of extras which include free cable TV for three years or no service charges for a year.

Apartments are ideal for those with lives too hectic to include DIY. John's flat was fully finished, including tiles and carpeting, so he has had little to do apart from adding those essential accoutrements for the discerning single: dimmer switches.

High-fliers with aspirations for a penthouse, but dependant on a mortgage, should check lender policy. Many building societies impose restrictions and will not consider homes above a certain level. The Woolwich's policy is not to lend on flats above the seventh floor. "It's a grey area and we look at each property individually to assess its future 'saleability'," says a spokesperson.

Living in the heart of the city brings easy access to work and entertainment but not everyone discovers village-like communities. John Tempest finds his location, down the road from the Imperial War Museum, handy for sight seeing when relatives come to stay, but has never met or even seen any neighbours. Perhaps it is not just the gutter which feels lonely.



Life in the clouds Dieter Rolph fell in love with his 29th floor Barbican flat

Photograph: Nicola Kurtz

From pot pourri to pot roast

A taste of ... lavender
from Norfolk, by
Nikki Spencer



Purple haze: the tradition of using lavender as a flavouring is being revived

Photograph: Brian Harris

Lavender may be strongly associated with scented clothes, but in fact it has also been used in cooking for hundreds of years – and is currently undergoing something of a revival. More and more chefs are using the pungent flower to flavour fish, lamb, sorbet and other foods, and this summer the New Covent Garden Soup Company is producing Potato, Leek and Lavender Soup for sale in grocery shops and supermarkets all over the country.

East Anglia is particularly suited to growing lavender because of its dry, light and sandy soil, according to Henry Head, managing director of the UK's largest commercial grower, Norfolk Lavender – although after the heavy rain last month he says that now he's not so sure. Dry weather from now until the end of July is the key to a good harvest. "I'd be very happy not to see another drop of rain," he says.

The family firm started growing lavender back in 1932, extracting oil for use in perfumery and drying flowers for pot pourri and

– more recently – for culinary purposes. The tea room at the company's headquarters at Caley Mill in Heacham sells lavender scones, lavender tea and lavender ice-cream, as well as jars of lavender marmalade.

Up on the coast at Wells-next-the-Sea, a passionate advocate of lavender in cooking is Carla Phillips, who runs The Moorings restaurant with her husband Bernard.

"Anything you can use rosemary for is pretty good with lavender, only it has more strength and vigour," enthuses Carla. She puts dried lavender (or fresh, when it's available) into salt water to flavour steamed fish, and uses it as a marinade with lemon and garlic on loin of lamb. She also makes an aromatic oil with lavender, steeping a sprig in oil with garlic and salt and pepper, to use a few weeks later on salads, or with mashed potato.

However, Carla warns against getting carried away with the idea of lavender as an ingredient. "Lavender is quite powerful and I

believe it works best when it is used subtly in savoury recipes. I think a sweet lavender sauce, for example, would be foul."

Lavender trails

● Norfolk Lavender, Caley Mill, Heacham (01485 570384) is open to the public, admission free, daily except Christmas Day. From mid-June to August you can see more than 100 acres of lavender in bloom by joining minibus tours of the fields (cost £3.95). From mid-July you can also see the distilling process, whereby the lavender is made into oil. As well as the tea rooms, the 19th-century mill has a garden centre and a shop that sells dried lavender flowers for cooking. The company also runs a mail-order service (01507 466466).

● The Moorings, 6 Freeman Street, Wells-next-the-Sea (01328 710949) is open from Thursday to Monday. Owner and chef Carla Phillips has written a book in conjunction with Norfolk Lavender entitled *Herbs from a Norfolk*

Kitchen – available for £3 plus 85p p&p from Norfolk Lavender.

● Two other Norfolk restaurants that use lavender regularly are Cougham Hall Hotel, Grimston, Kings Lynn (01485 600250), where the owner, Christine Forecast, grows more than 30 different varieties of lavender in her herb garden (open to the public daily 2pm-4pm, free); and Rococo, 11 Saturday Market Place, King's Lynn (01553 771483) where lavender and gin ice-cream is usually on the menu.

● The New Covent Garden Soup Company's Potato, Leek and Lavender Soup, made with fresh lavender flowers, will be available from 27 July to 9 August, price £1.49 for a carton.

Nectar of the Aztecs: in our article on chocolate, published on 4 April, we mentioned the Musée du Cacao et du Chocolat. Please note that the exhibition building – at 13 Grand Place, B 1000 Brussels – is currently undergoing refurbishment and is not open to the public until 1 July.

Flowers good enough to eat

The stuff of ... cakes. Sally Staples
discovers the delicate art of sugar craft

There is a shop that will solve the dilemma of whether to buy a wedding cake or learn to make one. Cortell and Barratt, specialists in the delicate art of sugar craft, offer both custom-made cakes and classes in how to decorate them yourself.

June Whichello and her husband Ron began their business 14 years ago. On display in a conservatory behind the shop – where classes are held – is a cabinet containing examples of sugar flowers that might pass muster if exhibited at Kew Gardens: lilies, roses, gardenias, foxgloves, orchids, petunias. Every detail is there, from yellowy-gold stamens at the centre of each flower, to the delicate twigs and leaves. The demand is growing for sugar flowers, and if you have a mind to try them yourself, June says she can teach a pupil in a single day.

In the shop, every cake-perfecting gadget is available to buy. The Whichellos are the sole importers to the UK of spe-

cial silicone moulds used for sugar craft in the US. They sell flower-cutters, coloured dusting powder, special cutters that achieve intricate lace effects on the icing, and even edible-ink pens. There is liquid glucose, piping jelly, confectioners' varnish to make the sugar leaves shine, and edible glue to stick petals on to the flower's centre. There are candles, modelling tools, non-stick rolling pins and boards, instruction books and a better selection of ribbons than you find in most haberdashers' shops.

The shop offers dozens of wedding cakes, from £199 to around £600. It accepts orders for cakes for children's birthdays and christenings and other special occasions. Classes for beginners cost from £20.

Cortell and Barratt, 40 High Street, Ewell, Surrey KT17 1RW (0181-393 0032). Open Mon, Tues, Thurs and Fri 9am-5pm, Wed 9am-1pm, Sat 9am-4pm



Photograph: John Lawrence

GAMES

Some of you reading this article will have been guided across from the crossword puzzle in this week's *Isis*. Some, I have no doubt, will be angry, some sad, and some perhaps even amused. Others may have hit this piece purely by chance.

The fact is that I have achieved – if "achieved" is the right word – something quite unusual, and have been invited by my long-suffering crossword editor, Louise Levene, to give an account of myself. In puzzle 149, published on 18 April in *Isis*, I invited solvers to fill in some squares with clashing letters "to accord with the shape they make", adding that "a final mark should be added at an appropriate intersection of two grid lines". The shape (see *Isis*) looked like a K knocked over. I assumed that readers would interpret it as a π (pi) and work out (perhaps following the hint in the puzzle's title "More or Less") the numerical differences between the clashing letters.

Thus, at the bottom of the pi the second I of IMAGINE in 26 down is three away from the second L of LILY at 41 across, so "3" is entered. Progressing up the leg of the pi, we get 3141, then 592... along the top and 7932 down the bottom leg. When you add the decimal point after the opening

CROSSWORD PUZZLERS OUT FOR A DUCK: DON MANLEY EXPLAINS HIMSELF

digit, you get 3.141592... the value of π. Clever stuff? Obviously too clever for all eight or nine hundred entrants.

Looking back, I can see that the shape of the pi is a bit inaccurate, and perhaps in my day job as a maths editor I am used to seeing too many handwritten approximations to this transcendental wonder. But surely the shape wasn't that bad, and a few mathematicians would have seen what I was driving at? Alas, I miscalculated.

There has long been a tradition of providing impossible or near-impossible crosswords. Two *Listener* puzzles spring to mind: in one crossword by "Afrif" in the Thirties or Forties, the publication expressed regret that none of its readers connected "Lombardy" and "Man of Words" with *The Cardinal's Snuff Box* at 28 across – a connection which some of us still fail to make; and about 20 years ago there was a puzzle entitled "Lip Service" by Leon, which involved playing a game of solitaire and spelling out the inscription on the Blarney Stone.

Afrif was a master working out the rules of a new game: Leon was probably too clever for his own good. So where does that place Duck? I'm in the

Leon camp, though I suspect Leon knew what he was doing. I guess that, despite over 30 years of setting, I didn't. I am as dumbfounded by the zero correct entries as the hapless solvers who failed to recognise the malformed mathematical symbol. But my feelings, to be honest, are mixed: I'm tempted to be excited at having fooled everyone, but reckon I should feel guilty at having spoiled everyone's fun.

Only two more things need to be said. One is that we need to explore the new and strange in crosswords to keep the game alive; the other is that no one should ever set out deliberately to produce a puzzle that will stump all the solvers. On that charge I plead innocent, so my apology to *Isis* enthusiasts has some qualification. For most of the time, the setter must expect to be a gracious loser in a battle of wits in a contest that has a fair set of rules and conventions. That is how the battle is normally conducted in the *Isis* puzzle, and indeed all the puzzles in *The Independent* and *Independent on Sunday*.

Don Manley contributes as 'Duck' to *Isis*. His less-than-impossible puzzles appear weekly in the *Independent on Sunday*, in the guise of Quixote.

PANDORA MELLY GAMES PEOPLE PLAY

Lord Grade, 91, film maker, producer, the Grade Company

We used to have races at school. I was a good, fast runner, but I never made it a part of my career. At the time, I had no idea what I was going to do, and certainly didn't know that I'd finish up in the entertainment industry.

If I could play anything, I would have liked to be a good tennis player. I had a house with a tennis court one time, but I wasn't any good, so I knew that it wasn't a natural thing for me. When you play games, you have to feel at ease with them.

I've tried golf, but unfortunately I just could not hit the ball, so I thought, why drive myself crazy? There's no point in anyone trying to play a game that they don't take to naturally.

When I was 18 years old I discovered the sport of dancing, and became an exceptional Charleston dancer. To begin with, I was a ballroom dancer. I wasn't very good, and it was hard to get a partner. But

when I started to Charleston, the girls were lining up to dance with me.

I'd learned to do intricate steps, because my father – as you probably know – was born in Russia. He was a very good Cossack dancer, and when I became a dancing act – which I was for eight years before I became an agent – I incorporated a lot of those steps that they do as Cossack dancers into my routines.

I am still the world Charleston champion. I won the competition at the Royal Albert Hall on 15 December 1926 and I learned only recently that one of the judges was Fred Astaire. If I'd known he was watching, I'd probably have failed with nerves.

Grade Productions produced 'On Golden Pond' and 'Sophie's Choice'. Their latest film, 'Something to Believe In', was released in the UK yesterday by Warner Bros. Maria Piliou and William McNamara star with Tom Conti, Maria Schneider and Ian Bannen.

CHESS: WILLIAM HARTSTON

Of all the many changes that have taken place in the chess world over the past three decades – the schism in the world championship, the bad influence of rapid play events on the general quality of play, the pernicious effects of computer analysis, and the introduction of the ludicrous Bobby Fischer Chess Clock among them – the one I find most depressing is the extinction of cheap chess sets made of French boxwood at the hands of an even less expensive plastic variety.

I say this not through any particular aesthetic delight at the tactile qualities of wood or a dislike of plastic itself. It's just the shape of the wooden knights' ears that I miss. The disappearance of the boxwood sets, you see, has deprived me of my one great claim to a place in chess history. For I was the first person ever, as far as I know, to pile an entire chess set on top of a single rook. And thanks to the despicable new plastic sets, that is an art that has totally died out.

You start with a rook (conventionally a white one, though black would, I suppose, be equally acceptable) placed normally on any square of a chessboard. The crenellations around its battlements provide the notches on which four pawns may be hung in a manner that allows the tops of the pawns to form the base for the next level.

Now comes the clever bit. Take two knights, two bishops and one rook. If you hang the knights' muzzles over the rook's battlements, you will find they stay in place. And they become even more stable if you tuck a bishop in under each of their bellies. (Point the two bishops in opposite directions for general stability.) The entire rook-plus-four-minor-pieces combination may then be balanced upon the four pawns on the original rook. Not only were the boxwood sets perfectly weighted for this to work, but the ears of the knights, pointed friskily upwards, left a four-point horizontal base for the next level.

So another rook, two bishop and two knights are disposed of in similar manner, leaving us with two queens, two kings and 12 pawns. It's a little tricky, but you can get rid of two of the pawns between the ears of the knights. Delicately placed, they are light enough not to upset the balance, and their position becomes more stable when the next level is added.

Three pawns can be hung round each queen's head, again forming a level triangular base of pawn-tops for the next storey. At the very top two kings may be suspended by their crosses on those very useful crenellations of the final rook. The last four pawns may be balanced on assorted bishops, with one or two even on the topmost rook between the kings.

The execution of this fine-pile took me most of my fourth year at Cambridge. Then the sets went out of fashion and my hope for eternal fame vanished with them.

CONCISE CROSSWORD



- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ACROSS | DOWN |
| 1 He-goat (5) | 2 Cake topping (5) |
| 4 Broadcasting (2,3) | 3 Outbuildings (4-3) |
| 10 Stir (7) | 5 Mother-of-pearl (5) |
| 11 Inexpensive (5) | 6 Climber's aid (3-4) |
| 12 Correct (5) | 7 Forces chaplain (5) |
| 13 Make a list of (7) | 8 Sum owing (5) |
| 15 Solemn word (4) | 9 Rapidity (5) |
| 17 Convulsive movement (5) | 14 At that time (4) |
| 19 Call to mind (5) | 16 Rounds for firearms (coll.) (4) |
| 22 Long, bushy hair (4) | 18 Non-de-plume (3-4) |
| 25 Masculinity (7) | 20 Banning (7) |
| 27 Heat unit (5) | 21 Gather (5) |
| 29 Rough hut (5) | 23 Unscripted remark (2,3) |
| 30 First (7) | 24 Walk slowly (5) |
| 31 Burglar's tool (5) | 26 Caulking material (5) |
| 32 Gemstone (5) | 28 Decree (5) |

Solution to yesterday's Concise Crossword:
ACROSS: 5 Wreck, 8 Amending (Recommendation), 9 Image, 10 Campaign, 11 Unity, 14 Sky, 16 Embank, 17 Escute, 18 Inn, 20 Alone, 24 Smulper, 25 Orful, 26 Allusion, 27 Tying, DOWN: 1 Watch, 2 Gores, 3 Ideas, 4 Knight, 6 Ruminate, 7 Cogitate, 12 Small fry, 13 Mainline, 14 Ski, 15 Yen, 19 Namely, 21 Elder, 22 Spout, 23 Ex-pat.

BRIDGE: ALAN HIRON

Game all; dealer South	
North	East
♠ 8 6	♠ 7 3 2
♥ Q 10 5	♥ 8 6 4 3
♦ 10 7 6 3	♦ A 9 4
♣ K 8 6 5	♣ A Q 2
West	South
♠ A 10 9 4	♠ K Q J 5
♥ 9 7 2	♥ A K J
♦ 8 5 2	♦ K Q J
♣ 7 4 3	♣ J 10 9

Oh dear! I shall have to give up offering well-meant advice and stick strictly to reporting facts. This deal produced a peevish letter from a correspondent.

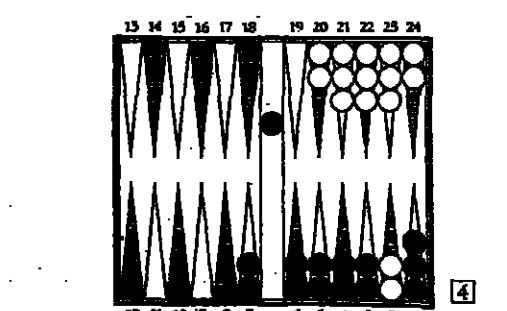
The bidding was simple: South opened Two No-trumps and North raised to game. West led ♠ 4 against Three No-trumps, obviously following my recent suggestion that the lead of a ten against a no-trump contract implied a strong suit with two higher honours. Dummy followed with the six and East (who had clearly noticed my other recent point, that rather than make an apparently useless attempt with near-garbage in partner's suit, it was more useful to give a count) thoughtfully played the two to suggest a three-card holding.

When ♠ 6 won, declarer still had two guards in spades and he attacked clubs. Now it was too late for the defenders to get a long card in any suit working and they came to only the four obvious tricks (a spade, a diamond and two clubs).

Yes, the lead of ♠ 10 defeats the contract when West ducks his partner's next spade return. Yes, East could have done everything that was necessary by covering ♠ 6 with his seven at trick one after which, again, West ducks the next spade return.

But the real culprit on the hand was declarer! Why? He really should have tried ♠ 8 from dummy at trick one – a play that could hardly cost and would have provided an unexpected third stopper in spades.

BACKGAMMON: CHRIS BRAY



Here's a position that confronted Murray "Quickdouble" Sharp at the Double Fives the other night. Murray, playing Black, had not only doubled early but had also accepted the redouble when all around him in the chouette had very sensibly passed. In his own inimitable style he had turned the game round to reach the position above. Should he redouble to 8?

The position is highly volatile and could change dramatically over the next two rolls. If Murray enters with any 6, White will be all but lost. Conversely, if he stays on the bar and White rolls a 6 then all the pressure will be on Murray. Most people have a natural fear of doubling from the bar against a 5-point board but Quickdouble is not of this ilk, and he redoubled with hardly a moment's thought. His opponent took: Quickdouble rolled 63 and comfortably won the game. The question is: were the double and take correct?

The answer is that this is an excellent benchmark position. Black should double and White should take. If White were any weaker, for example if he had only a 4-point, or if he had a blot exposed on his 6-point, then he should drop.

How do you evaluate this over the board? Black should note that if he rolls a 6, or he stays on the bar and then White doesn't roll a 6, he will become a prohibitive favourite, so now is the time to double. White should note that if Black doesn't roll a 6 and White does roll a 6, then he will have a very strong position. As this will happen nearly 25 per cent of the time, this gives him enough chances to take.

The final point to make is that success goes to players who are good at applying pressure. Quickdouble Sharp certainly did that in this position, applying exactly the right pressure at the right time.

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